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BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

A PARALLEL AND A CONTRAST

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From the Author.
Jan.y. 1890.

BUDDHISM

AND CHRISTIANITY

A PARALLEL AND A CONTRAST

BEING

THE CROALL LECTURE FOR 1889-90

BY

ARCHIBALD SCOTT, D.D.

MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S PARISH, EDINBURGH

EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS

MDCCCXC

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PREFACE

In endeavouring to sketch in so limited a space even the most salient features of the many-sided religion of Buddhism it is possible that here and there I may have misrepresented it. If so, I hope the fault will be attributed to inadvertence, or rather to disadvantages under which I have worked. The sacred beliefs of any section of mankind are entitled to receive at our hands not only justice but kindly consideration, and a religion so vast and in some respects so wonderful as Buddhism ought to have much to commend it to our sympathy. Long and patient study of it has indeed greatly modified opinions originally formed concerning it, but it has only tended to increase respect for so earnest an effort of the intellect to solve the mystery of human life and destiny. Even Christians may have something to learn

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from Buddhists. The divers and seemingly antagonistic Churches of Christendom help to educate and reform each other, and non-Christian religions may perform a similar office to Christianity in bringing into prominence some universal truths which its creeds have allowed to slip into forgetfulness. Our perception and apprehension of what Christianity really is will be all the clearer and firmer for an impartial study of the system formulated so long ago by Gotama the Buddha.

The aim of the Lecture has not been to use the extravagances of Buddhism as a foil to set off the excellencies of Christianity. That Christianity as a religion is immensely superior to Buddhism goes without saying, unless in the case of a very small and conceited and purblind minority. I have tried by a fair exposition of what is best and highest in this religion to discover its feeling after something better and higher still, and to suggest rather than indicate the place which it occupies in the religious education of humanity. As

> "Man hath all which nature hath, but more,
> And in that more lie all his hopes of good,"

so Christianity, while having in it in fuller measure and clearer form every truth that has vivified any other religion, has in it, as the new creation to which

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the long travail of the soul under every form of faith has from the first been pointing, something peculiar and contrasted—which is the Divine answer to all their aspirations. This we do not need to demonstrate: indeed it may be a verity, as incapable of demonstration as is that of the existence of Deity or the immortality of the soul. It is sure eventually to be almost universally recognised, and meanwhile, whether accepted or denied, we may say—*E pur si muove.*

Very gratefully would I acknowledge my profound obligations to all who have instructed me in this subject. Though we no longer regard the Saddharma-Pundarika and Lalita Vistara as good specimens of Buddhism, we still venerate the great scholars who first introduced them to our notice. The splendid productions of Burnouf, Foucaux, Köppen, Stanislas Julien, Hodgson and Turnour; the excellent works of Spence Hardy, Gogerly, Bigandet and H. H. Wilson, and, among the best of all, the laborious and faithful Dictionary of Professor Childers, though several of them are unfortunately out of print, are not likely to be soon out of date. It is with pleasure that we find them so frequently quoted or referred to

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by our latest and best authorities. Still, ever since Professor Max Müller organised his truly catholic enterprise of the translation of the Sacred Books of the East, he has brought us very considerably nearer to real Buddhist teachers themselves. To praise the scholarship of himself, and Oldenberg, and Rhys Davids, and Kern, and Fausböll, and others of his *collaborateurs*, would be unwarrantable presumption on my part; but as a humble disciple very willing to learn, I am glad to have this opportunity of publicly expressing my appreciation of the great services which in their editions of old Eastern texts, and in these series of translations, they are rendering to the cause of religion.

The lectures were drafted and in great part written before I read the very valuable works of Sir Monier Williams on *Buddhism* and of Dr. Kellogg on the *Light of Asia and the Light of the World*. I specially mention these books as likely to prove very useful guides to any one desirous of prosecuting the subject of the present Lecture. In the notes I have marked my indebtedness to them, and to many authors of what has already become a great literature. Many others whose works have been of service to me in a course of

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reading extending over many years are not noted, simply because in the caprices of memory my peculiar obligations to them could not at the time be recalled.

For in regard to Buddhism I do not profess to add any original information to the stock already acquired. Others have extracted the ore from these old and interesting fields, and minted it into gold and silver. What has thus been rendered available many like myself can only reduce into copper or bronze, but if only our work be faithfully done, we may thus help in increasing the currency and in extending its circulation. With this in view I accepted the honour which the Croall Trustees conferred upon me in calling me to undertake this Lecture, and if the only effect of my efforts be to stimulate other ministers of the Church more advantageously situated to prosecute their researches to much better purpose, no one will be more pleased than myself.

ARCHIBALD SCOTT.

EDINBURGH, 25*th December* 1889.

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BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

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LECTURE I.

NECESSITY FOR A PROPER COMPARISON OF THE TWO RELIGIONS.

EARLY in this century Schopenhauer, fascinated by the contents of the Upanishads, which had been translated from the Persian into Latin by the illustrious discoverer of the Zend-Avesta, ventured to predict that the influence of the newly-found Sanskrit literature upon the philosophy of the future would not be less profound than was that of the revival of Greek upon the religion of the fourteenth century.[1] That century was marked by the close of the mediæval age, and the beginning of the times of Reformation in which we are privileged to live. The Reformation was not an event, but the inauguration of a period. Its significance was far deeper than that of a revolt from ecclesiastical superstition and corruption. It meant a quickening of the human spirit, and a consequent awakening of the

[1] *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Pref. xiii.

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human intellect, to which many forces other than the leading religious ones, contributed; and its effects are visible not simply in the changes which it immediately produced, but in the revolution which is still actively progressing in all our social, political, and religious relations. The movement designated by the Reformation is manifestly far from having exhausted itself, and there can be no question that its course has been greatly accelerated by the studies to which Schopenhauer referred.

The re-discovery of India, lost to Europe for centuries after the beginning of the Christian era, almost as completely as America was hidden from it, was a fact of even greater import than the resurrection of Greece. It was no wilderness of ruins which was thus disclosed, from which only the shards of a long-buried civilisation could be exhumed, but a living and cultured world, whose institutions were rooted in an antiquity more profound than Greece could claim, and whose language and manners and religion were separated from the West by far more than a hemisphere. So totally unlike to the Western world was it, that the labours and sacrifices of several generations of the finest intellects of Europe were required before a key could be found to interpret its significance. Since the days when Anquetil Duperron, after many adventures and hardships, succeeded in breaking

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through the tangled thicket which guarded its treasures, the scholars of all nations have pressed into it, each one announcing, as he emerged, the dawn or the progress of another Renaissance, whose meaning and direction and ultimate issues only the rash will venture to predict or pretend to foresee.

One of the first-fruits of their combined or independent researches is the new science of Religion. By a careful collection, analysis, and comparison of all the beliefs of mankind available, with the view of eliciting what is peculiar to each, and what they all share in common, its professors aim at discovering what may be the real nature and origin and purpose of all religion.[1] As yet it should hardly be designated a science, for though the elements for it undoubtedly exist, they are too widely scattered to be of service for immediate induction. The materials already collected have not been sufficiently sifted, and moreover, it requires the assistance of other sciences, as yet too immature, to render it effective support. The title may not be a "misnomer,"[2] but only a somewhat inflated expression by which an age, rather wise in its own conceit, pro-

[1] Professor Max Müller, Gifford Lectures for 1888, on *Natural Religion*, p. 11.

[2] T. W. Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, 1881, "On the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by some points in the History of Indian Buddhism," p. 10.

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claims the discovery of a new field of learning which it means assiduously to cultivate. The discovery however is a solid one, and the assiduity of those who would improve it is unmistakable; year by year their numbers increase, their implements improve in quality, and this generation may not pass away before an abundant harvest has been reaped.

Another indication of the change that is coming over the world is the attitude which Christian divines now assume toward other religions. Fifty years ago the attempt to compare our Bible and our Creed with the scriptures of other religions would have been regarded as a sacrilegious surrender of what was holy to the dogs. This was due not so much to prejudice on the part of the expounders of Christianity as to aversion to the avowedly anti-christian spirit in which these researches were prosecuted. The Comparative method was then frequently employed, as it had been by the Encyclopædists of last century, for the purpose of discrediting and degrading Christianity. The conclusion was often foregone before the process began; and so it was natural that reverent but timid minds jealous for their religion, and anxious to guard it from insult, should decline such encounters. Now, however, orthodox theologians are quite aware that in this matter they have to reckon with other than the professed enemies of Christianity. The

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ablest advocates of Comparative Theology are not only free from antichristian prejudice, but they protest against it as inimical to the science itself.[1] It is not infidelity, but Providence, that is forcing us to investigate the origin of our religion, and to search its scriptures in the fuller light which we now enjoy. We are being divinely taught that we cease to revere a heavenly gift the moment we begin to idolise it; that the disposition most fatal to ourselves, most dishonouring to our religion, is that which would regard its scriptures as charmed relics too sacred to be examined, and only to be brought by an undevout and apostate Church, in the moment of its extreme peril, into the field of battle with the Philistines. To shrink from the comparison of our Faith with the religious beliefs of those whom we acknowledge to be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, is to manifest a cowardly lack of confidence in its Author. It is at the judgment-bar of all the ages that He means to make good His claim to be the Judge of all mankind. The more He is tried, the more will His authority be confessed to be divine. He certainly invited inspection and comparison, and He may have had other than Hebrew scriptures in His view when He instructed us to "search them, for they testify of Me."[2]

[1] Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 38.

[2] John v. 39.

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The comparative study of other religions, so far from being prejudicial to the claims of Christianity, will be helpful in establishing its sublime pre-eminence among them, and in enabling us to discharge to their adherents the duty which its Founder has imposed upon us. It may modify considerably our theology, but it will strengthen our fundamental beliefs. As a general rule, we may assert that the strength of a man's faith will be found to be in direct proportion to his knowledge of the everlasting and unchangeable laws by which the universe is governed. It is our theology alone that is assailed, and we are learning that theology, as a system of reasoning upon materials furnished not only by religion itself, but also by some other "ologies," must be based on other and higher authority than that of an infallible Council, or that of a chapter whose significance was supposed to be unalterably fixed two or three thousand years ago. The religion which revolted against the assumption of the Scribe in our Lord's day, and which disallowed the claim of the Pope some three centuries ago to be the sole interpreters of revelation, is not only testing the authenticity of the texts to which the appeal was then made, but is inquiring into their actual significance by collating them with the truths of another revelation as divine. It is not that men want to get rid of dogma, for

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dogma of some kind there must ever be. There will always be a vast deal which we must believe, because there is much that can only thus be known; but a satisfactory dogmatic foundation must henceforth be sought in facts anterior to any scriptures, or to any church that would interpret them, viz., in the elemental necessities and aspirations of our common human nature. It has been wisely said that "the theology which fails to meet the demands of the whole man is simply doomed."[1] What is wanted therefore for theology is some broad and solid basis, to be laid by analysing, comparing, and co-ordinating all religious beliefs within our reach. In each of them we may hope to find some truth—it may be very feebly and very partially expressed—of no more value by itself than a flake of gold found in an immense drift of sand or mass of quartz, but yet of immense value as indicating the source from which it came and the substance to which it claims affinity. All separate and imperfect truths point towards some higher truth which will unite and fulfil and interpret them. And so every religion, however erroneous it may be, is prophetic—because found in a humanity that is essentially one—of a universal religion, a faith which is not just one of the faiths of the nations, but is the divine

[1] Baring Gould, *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, vol. i. p. 121.

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answer, unchanged and inexhaustible, to all the aspirations of mankind. The study of other religions therefore, even of those of the most degraded peoples, and of those most contradictory of our own, is as binding upon us as is the study of our Bibles. For us "history" has been truly said "to stand in the place of prophecy," [1] and it is only by gathering up and considering its testimony that we can appreciate the worth of the treasure which has been given to us, that we may communicate it to all the world.

Prominent among the religions that challenge our consideration is the one which, following authorities acknowledged to be the best, we will endeavour briefly to sketch and to expound. It is not an obsolete system, appealing only to the poetic sentiment from a vanished past, like the religion of Greece, but one which confronts us with vitality sufficient to overshadow a considerable portion of the populous East. Two thousand four hundred years have passed since it was first proclaimed, and though it disappeared long ago from the land of its birth, it still reigns in many kingdoms, and continues to spread its influence in several directions in Central and Northern Asia. To tell its story completely would be to write the history of nearly the whole of China, India, and the countries

[1] Westcott, *Victory of the Cross*, pp. 3, 6.

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that lie around or between them. Till very recently it was generally computed that quite one-third of the human family, though widely separated geographically and otherwise, professed to find in Buddhism consolation sufficient to strengthen them to do the work and endure the sufferings of life, and to confront with calmness the necessity of death.

Were this computation correct, Buddhism would have to be accounted by far the most widely accepted of all the religions of mankind. It has however been seriously challenged by those whose experience and candour are beyond question. According to their enumeration, Buddhism must rank only fourth in the scale of numerical comparison among the great faiths of the world, for instead of there being five hundred millions of adherents, as we were previously led to believe, probably not more than one hundred millions of professing Buddhists can be found in all the world.[1] The question in dispute after all is one of only secondary importance, for we can hardly conceive of any one other

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids estimates the number at five hundred millions (*Handbook of Buddhism*, p. 6). The previous general estimate was about four hundred millions; but Dr. A. J. Happer, missionary at Canton for forty-five years, reduces this number to seventy-three millions. Sir Monier Williams, in his recent book on Buddhism, quoting Professor Legge's introduction to *Travels of Fa-Hian*, calculates the number at one hundred millions, and claims for Christianity, with its four hundred and thirty millions of adherents, the numerical preponderance over all others.

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than some democratic fanatic who would propose to settle the truth of a religion by a reckoning of the suffrages which it could command. Numerical statistics of religious adherence furnish only an indirect test even of influence. It is impossible to indicate even geographically the range of a religion. We are very properly reminded that "the influence of Buddhism in India may be immense, though not a single Buddhist temple exists in it, while its influence in China and Ceylon may be vastly over-stated in figures, for many Chinese Buddhists may be called Confucianists and Taoists, and many Singhalese worshippers at Buddha's shrines are far from being only or altogether Buddhists."[1] Indeed everywhere, though chiefly in Thibet, Nepaul, and Mongolia, the religion which is called Buddhism is no more Buddhist than the survivals of Pagan worship and belief which are found in some extreme forms of Romanism can be called Christian.

The rapidity with which and the extent to which a religion has spread is no certain indication of its capability to meet and satisfy the real spiritual necessities of mankind. A religion may rapidly gain, and retain for long, an ascendency over many men, without possessing any of the

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 4, 7; Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 171.

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qualities essential to its being recognised as the one religion of all men. The catholicity of a faith is indicated not by the extent of the supremacy which it has acquired, but by the quality of its contents. Universal truths are not necessarily the truths which have won the consent of the greatest numbers. The test of *quod ubique, semper, et ab omnibus*, if thoroughly applied, would have established the truth of many a degrading superstition in former times. "It is not that which is common to barbarism and civilisation which is most truly human, but precisely that in which civilisation differs from barbarism." [1] The divinity of a religion, instead of being attested by the readiness with which it is accepted, may be indicated by the antagonism which it at first evokes. Truth at no time depends upon majorities, at least in this world, for here truth of any kind, when first proclaimed, instead of meeting a generally friendly reception, has to win its victory by conflict and lay in martyrdom the foundation of its throne.[2]

[1] Dr. Caird, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Croall Lectures, 1878-9, pp. 82 *seq.*; T. W. Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, 1881, *On the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by Buddhism*, p. 7.

[2] To draw proper inferences from statistics of the spread and supremacy of a religion, we must first investigate the circumstances in which it was propagated, and the intellectual and moral conditions of the peoples whom it has converted. If it has gained only the belief of *one* section of the human race, it is evidently not entitled to rank with another which proves itself influential among *all* sections A religion dominant only over *inferior* races is manifestly of less value than another

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It is not on account of its adherents, however, nor of the superficial extent of its supremacy—though such facts have indeed a very pathetic significance—but it is in respect of the quality of its original faith, that Buddhism is considered worthy of comparison with Christianity. We must not be repelled by the childish superstitions and gross absurdities with which it is incrusted, for in a religion so ancient and extensive this is just what we might expect to find; nor should we be surprised at the marvellous and grotesque legends which profess to relate its origin and early history, for these, as Professor Müller has very properly reminded us, "are the clouds, not alway rosy, that gather round the sunrise of any religion."[1] In the estimation of its severest critics, Buddhism must occupy a grand and exalted place in the general history of religions.[2] Among the various systems of the non-Christian world, ancient or modern, none can compare with it in respect of its ethical code, its spirit of toleration and gentleness, and its beneficent influence upon

which, while satisfying the wants of the lowest and most degraded peoples, is yet fulfilling the spiritual aspirations of the *highest*. The first, if in any way related to the second, can only be so as preparatory and prophetic of the mission which the second alone can accomplish.

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i. Introd.

[2] Köppen, *Die Religion des Buddha*, s. 231; J. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, *Le Bouddha*, etc., pp. 78, 144, 181; Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 358.

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many wild populations that have embraced it. Neither Zeno nor Marcus Aurelius conceived a higher theory of morals, in which justice and temperance were infused by kindness, than that which the founder of Buddhism successfully reduced to practice. It was the most natural of all things therefore, that it had only to be introduced to the notice of Christendom to win for itself a degree of admiration accorded to no other heathen faith.

We would be understating its claims, however, if we referred to it as appealing only to our Christian consideration and sympathy. It has been brought into the lists of criticism as the rival of Christianity. Modern unbelief is forcing it upon our notice as a much truer philosophy of existence and a more satisfactory theory of the universe than that furnished by Christianity. We cannot let it alone, were it for no other reason that it will not let us alone. In the civilised and semi-civilised portions of the East its disciples have long ago ceased to propagate it, and as a form of belief it may be said that there not only has it reached the limits of its extension, but that its present condition is one of "increasing disintegration and decay."[1] Even in the East, however, among the classes who have most

[1] Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. xv, Introd.

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come under the influence of Western culture, the spirit of Buddhism shows considerable vitality, and there its spirit is coming into constant and active collision with Christianity every day. The educated or intelligent Buddhist of Burmah or Siam tells us plainly that he will not give up his ancient faith for Christianity; for notwithstanding the manifold and manifest absurdities of his ancestral religion, he professes to find the same in the forms in which Christianity has been presented to him. By the light of our science we have helped him to weed out his old superstitions, and he will not accept from us any new ones. In language marvellously akin to that of the founder of Buddhism, he discards every religion as involving the worship of deity, and he professes to find in Suttas more ancient than our Gospels a morality as sublime, a charity as comprehensive, and a system of faith sufficient to bear the strain of all his necessities, whether present or future.[1] In short, Buddhism as professed by a modern Oriental with any pretension to culture, is almost identical with that paradoxical condition of thought or belief which maintains, and indeed professes to be spreading in Christendom as modern Agnosticism.

[1] Alabaster, *Modern Buddhist*; *in the Wheel of the Law*, p. 73; Trübner and Co., 1871.

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But it is not in an attitude of resistance only that Buddhism confronts Christianity even in the East. In Ceylon, if we are to trust the *Times of India*,[1] it numbers among its typical gains "a young highly educated European lady and a clergyman of the English Church," and these, it is averred, "are not the first, and are not likely to be the last of its direct converts from the Christian churches." In Europe and America also, not among the lower and less educated, but among the higher ranks of society, among people affecting culture and new light, are to be found not a few professing admirers, if not practical followers, of Buddha and his law. The admiration of many of these dilettanti may sometimes be found to be in exact proportion to their ignorance of Buddhism. Their information is drawn almost exclusively from such sources as are supplied by the romance of Sir Edwin Arnold and works like those produced by Mr. Sinnett and Colonel Olcott;[2] but even when we discount all these, we must own that here and there we find some thoughtful and earnest people who profess to have come out from bondage to the beggarly elements of the Church's

[1] 5th April 1885. In the Madras *Times* for October 29, 1886, a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of True Religion is advertised, for reading and exposition of the Bhagavad-Gita.

[2] *The Light of Asia*; *The Occult World*; *Esoteric Buddhism*; *Theosophy of Archaic Religions.*

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faith to gentle Buddha's better gospel of liberty. Mr. Alabaster's *Modern Buddhist* finds a co-religionist not only in the disciples of Feuerbach and Von Hartmann, but in every "fervent atheist" who, acknowledging nothing in the universe save man, and a system of unbending law in which he is involved, and with which he is sometimes confounded, has been compelled to deify humanity and to demand for its idol a service worthy of a divine object of faith.

So another prediction of Schopenhauer's, uttered in the beginning of the century, seems to be repeated in many publications at its close. "In India," he affirmed, "our religion will never strike root; the primitive wisdom of the human race will never be pushed aside by any incidents in Galilee. On the contrary, Indian wisdom will flow back upon Europe, and produce a thorough change in our knowing and thinking."[1] He certainly laboured hard to bring about the fulfilment of his prophecy, preaching Nirvana as the goal of moral effort, though confessing that his own animal propensities allowed him no hope of attaining it. In his lifetime his strenuous endeavours were unsuccessful, and he died in 1860 in comparative neglect. Since then, and especially since the publication of his book *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, the doctrine

[1] *Parerga*, 3d ed. i. 59.

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painfully planted, has taken root in the congenial soil prepared for it by Comte and his disciples. Spiritualism again—which, though originating only in 1848, in circumstances almost ludicrous, has spread so rapidly and extensively that it now claims to count its converts by millions all over the world—has obviously contributed to the dissemination and growth of pseudo-Buddhist ideas. With a literature of over five hundred psychological works—many of them voluminous and very costly—and with forty-six periodicals regularly published in Europe and America, it not only assails Christianity, but supports the doctrine that "the Reign of Law has supplanted the Reign of God; that just as we have ceased to embody the conception of the State in a person, it is time we should cease similarly to embody the conception of the universe, for loyalty to a personal ruler is an anachronism in the nineteenth century, and will some day become extinct."[1] Its apostles profess to find in the Christian faith many signs of disintegration, and they look "to the bloodless and innocent record of Buddhism for the reconstruction of true religious faith upon a permanent basis."[2] This they expound in a so-called theosophy in phraseology largely borrowed from the New Testa-

[1] *Westminster Review*, New Series, vol. xlviii. p. 469.

[2] Gerald Massey, *Light*, 16th June 1883.

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ment, but descriptive of a curious amalgam of later Buddhist and Hindu doctrines utterly contradictory to the essential teaching of Christianity.

Occultism, Esoteric Buddhism, which professes to supplant the religion of Jesus, and to prepare the way of the twelfth of the Messiahs, whose mission is to harmonise the perverted teaching of his predecessors,[1] and thus establish the universal religion of humanity, is not likely to occasion serious concern. It is just another of those instances in which the diseases of a lower civilisation are communicated to one superior and more robust. Just as plagues originating in the ruined or degraded populations of the East have repeatedly desolated large portions of Europe, where they found physical conditions favourable to their spread, so there are mental and moral epidemics which, generated among inferior religions, propagate themselves in the very highest, for reasons almost similar. There are modern conditions which present very close affinities to those out of which Buddhism arose. It has been truly called the religion of despair, and it seems suited to that intellectual *ennui* in which many profess to live who find themselves confronted by problems which they are unable to solve. The enervating agnosticism and sentimental pessimism of our

[1] Among these are reckoned Adam, Fohi, Laotze, Jesus, Mohammed, and Jenghiz Khān.—Kinnealy, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, p. 685.

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generation furnish the very soil in which the germs of Buddhism are most likely to mature; but the spiritual life of Christendom is too robust to succumb to its heresy of inertion and moral defeat. The system of Buddha, even as laid out by himself, is not at all likely to entrap any considerable number of Western nineteenth-century thinkers; and this mongrel system of Neo-Buddhism, though professing to be founded on that ancient creed, will only find adherents among peculiar people. There is always a tendency in the most advanced civilisation, on the part of some who are freed from the necessity of industry, so essential to man's mental and moral as well as to his physical health, to revert to beliefs and customs peculiar to earlier and inferior stages of culture. It is a curious and significant fact,[1] that not among the working and professional classes, but among the upper and fashionable ranks of modern society, such survivals of ancient superstition as intercourse with spirits and palmistry are chiefly now to be found. For such unstable souls as have been or may be tempted to be drawn into these practices by an appeal to the authority of the beautiful character limned for our generation in the *Light of Asia*, I know no better restorative than a plain exposition of primitive Buddhism. It will be seen then that this modern fungus is a growth

[1] Pember, *Earth's Earlier Ages*, p. 326.

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almost as foreign in its nature to real Buddhism as it is to true Christianity. The degenerate Buddhism from which it borrows its largest stock of ideas bears the same relation to the actual teaching of Buddha that the Cabbala bear to the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the doctrines which it counts upon as most popular and attractive are precisely those which Buddha would have treated with his most withering scorn.

There is yet another characteristic of this religion which has commended it more to the unbelief than the belief of our age. Many agreements are alleged to subsist between the contents of the New Testament and those of the sacred books which profess to record the life and express the teaching of Buddha. Its ancient Pitakas are said to be filled with stories resembling the narratives of the Evangelists, with sayings which recall the parables, and miracles reflecting the signs and wonders which signalised the ministry of Jesus. It is averred that with the single exception of the Crucifixion—and how immense is the significance of that exception I shall endeavour in a subsequent lecture to show,—it would be easy to find in them a parallel to almost every incident related in the Gospel. Most startling of all are said to be the resemblances between the central figures in both sets of scriptures. For Buddhism, as truly as Christianity, has its

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ideal of a perfect human life, illustrated in one who, like unto the Son of Man, went about doing good, and enforcing by his example the pure morality which he preached, but who, most unlike the Son of Man, without any sustaining belief in deity, or hope of sympathy or help from any divine being, professed to have made good his own salvation, and to teach all whom he could reach the way to work out theirs.

When we come to examine its history, we find that it has followed a line of development strikingly parallel to that of Christianity, and the parallels thus furnished by its antecedents and progress, and by the external and foreign influences which encountered and modified it, are those which have the most interest and instruction for the student of Religion. In order, however, to ascertain their significance, we must examine these alleged correspondences of story and of doctrine; for these have powerfully influenced a certain class of thinkers, as supplying confirmation of a charge brought against our religion in almost the beginning of its history, that after all there was nothing original in Christ, and nothing new in His teaching. That resemblances do exist, not only between the forms in which Buddhism confronts us in some quarters of the world and the ritual and organisation of a large section of the Christian Church, but between the contents of the

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Buddhist scriptures as we have them now, and those of the New Testament, all must admit. As we cast a hasty and general glance over them we see how natural and how pardonable was the old rough and ready method of accounting for them by the supposition of direct transference of the various lineaments from the one to the other. The early Jesuit missionaries did not hesitate to assert that the Buddhists, by assimilating and incorporating the rites and doctrines of the primitive missionaries, had succeeded in producing a caricature of Christianity. In like manner, when in Central America—till then as independent of Europe as if it had been separated not by untraversed oceans, but by the immensities that divide the planets—the Spaniards found to their amazement a most complex religion, with priests, and monasteries, and temples adorned with the cross and statues of a goddess with an infant in her arms, they could only explain the mystery by averring that it was a gigantic mimetic ruse of the devil to lead the unhappy nations astray. The suppositions in both cases are not likely to be seriously supported now. Indeed, it is far more likely, as the author of *Ancient Christianity* and Dr. Prinsep and others have attempted to show, that in the East we have to seek for the origin of several institutions and rites once considered the peculiar growth of Greek or

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Latin Christianity. There can be little doubt that as these religions spread they would come in contact with and react upon each other.[1] It is difficult in the present state of our knowledge to indicate their first conjunction, or to trace their various intercommunications, but that they have been mutually indebted to each other is sufficiently attested by their histories. In later Hinduism and Buddhism and Lamaism there are plain indications of the action of the Western upon the Eastern religions. Romanism, on the other hand, has set its official seal upon the relationship, by incorporating a legend of Buddha among its "Lives of the Saints," by canonising the founder of this most antichristian of all religions, and by consecrating the 27th November as a day on which he may be invoked for intercession.[2]

Though as yet the field is only opening out, and its exploration is only beginning, there can be little doubt that it will be found that in their advanced stages Buddhism and Greek and Latin Christianity have contributed to each other's resources; but it is quite another matter to assert that the existence of the one religion accounts for the origin of the other, and that Christianity, as the junior of

[1] H. H. Wilson, *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 376; Huc and Gabet, *Travels in Tartary and Thibet*; translated by Mrs. P. Sinnett and W. Hazlitt.

[2] *Buddhist Birth Stories*, translated by T. W. Rhys Davids, vol. i. Introd. p. xli.

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the two, is simply "a product of India spoiled in its route to Palestine."[1] Those who allege that the sources of Christianity may be discovered in Buddhism are bound not to assume but clearly to trace and demonstrate the medium of communication between the two. As yet the allegation, though frequently made, appears to be incapable of proof. Renan's picture of "wandering Buddhist monks who overran the whole world, and converted on the banks of the Jordan, by their garb and manners, people who did not understand their language, like the Franciscan monks in later days," is only a pious imagination.[2] And so are the theories elaborated by M. Emile Burnouf in the *Science of Religions* and by M. Ernest de Bunsen in his *Angel Messiah of the Buddhists.* Both these authors have explained to their own satisfaction the derivation of Christianity from old Indian or Aryan beliefs, which, transmitted through Parthia to the Babylonian Jews, by them communicated to the Essenes John Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth, and from them again passed on to the Therapeut Stephen, were formulated in the plastic mind of Paul of Tarsus into the Christian dogmas which we now revere. The scheme is devised with thoroughly French precision, and the treatises in which it is

[1] Foucher de Careil, *Hegel et Schopenhauer*, p. 306.

[2] *Vie de Jésus*, p. 98, 4th ed.; Paris, 1863.

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elaborated, full as they are of indications of great ingenuity and laborious research, are interesting as any romance. For scientific purposes, however, they have hardly more historic worth than a romance. Based upon assumptions, they are constructed almost entirely of hypotheses: when a difficulty emerges, it is solved by a supposition which further on is confirmed by a "reasonable expectation" of something else, so that by and by the supposition meets us as an established result. They abound in analogies, some of which transgress as flagrantly the laws of time as the theory once advanced that the story of Christ is only a reflection of the legend of Krishna, seeing that belief in Krishna did not arise in India till centuries after Christianity had reached its shores. "The laws of language[1] are also violated as openly as they were by the discovery that the mysterious word 'Om' of the Upanishads is the equivalent of the 'Amen' in ancient Hebrew worship." It may be as possible by this method to prove the connection between the Vedic and Levitical institutions, as it is possible to establish the conclusion that the old Aryan symbol of the fire sticks is the fontal idea of the Cross, or that

[1] The Buddhists, as Professor Kuenen remarks, do not believe in angels, and they have no *Messiah*. Tathagata, which Mr. de Bunsen translates "The Coming One," *i.e.* Messiah, means "One *who has gone*" or "has arrived at" (Nirvana), like his predecessors. So Oldenberg, Rhys Davids, Bigandet, Edkins, Rajendralal Mitra: see too Dr. Kellogg, *Light of Asia and the Light of the World*, pp. 106, 107.

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the Vedic word "Agni" is equivalent to the Latin "Agnus Dei." Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter[1] and Professor Kuenen[2] have most exhaustively and decisively exposed the vanity of such speculations, which, on the whole, may be regarded as a good confirmation of a saying uttered by Professor H. H. Wilson some thirty years ago, in reference to those who would derive Christianity from Indian sources, that "the disposition to draw impossible analogies is not yet wholly extinct."

As far as the history of Buddhism can be traced it presents no actual point of contact with either Syria or Egypt or Europe. Even after it became a missionary religion its progress was never westwards, and at no period did it reach further in this direction than the region now known as Afghanistan. The civilisation of the West offered no opportunity for its enthusiasm, and none of the great Western cities appear in its records. In the few scattered extracts which survive of the writings of those Greeks who visited India during or subsequent to the period of Alexander's invasion, there is no indication of a knowledge of Buddhism, nor any allusion to Buddha by name. We have to come down to the times of Clement of Alexandria[3] and

[1] See for these and other curious instances his article on "The Obligations of the New Testament to Buddhism," *Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1880.

[2] *Natural and Universal Religions*, Hibbert Lectures, 1882.

[3] *Strom.* i. 15; Porphyry, *de Abstin.* iv. 17.

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of Bardesanes the Syrian before we have any tangible evidence of the slightest acquaintance on the part of the West with Buddhism. The first writer mentions Buddha by name, the second distinguishes his monks from the Brahmans, and gives some details as to their customs, but it is impossible from their statements to conjecture how much they knew of the faith to which they alluded, and most absurd to infer from them that they were affected with the slightest admiration for it.[1]

If Christianity be the offspring of Buddhism, or even if Buddhism exercised any direct influence upon its earliest development, some indications of that influence should be traceable in the Jewish and Greek literature of that period. Yet in spite of the most searching examination none have as yet been found, and it is not at all likely that they ever will be found.[2] Our religion was well advanced in

[1] Schwanbeck, *Megasthenes Indica*, p. 20; Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumskunde*, 209; H. H. Wilson, *Essays*, ii. p. 314 *seq.*; Reinaud, *Relations Politiques et Commerciales de l'Empire Romain avec l'Asie Central*, Paris, 1863; Priaulx, *Travels of Apollonius and the Indian Embassies to Rome*, Paris, 1873.

[2] The question of the disciples in John ix. 2, concerning the man who was born blind, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" is alleged by Professor Seydel (*Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddha-Sage und Buddha-Lehre*) to indicate an idea introduced into the Gospel from a foreign source, as the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls was then unknown among the Jews Meyer in his critical and exegetical Handbook to St. John's Gospel has shown that no one required to go outside the sphere of Jewish thought for an explanation of this part of the disciples' question. In addition to his

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its course before we find in the works of its defenders any sign of acquaintance with the Buddhist legend, or any expression of suspicion, as on the part of Cyril and Ephraim of Jerusalem in the fourth century, that the taint of some of the heresies which had infected the Church might be traced to its contagion. Then, unfortunately for the ingeniously constructed theory that the doctrines were secretly transmitted by the channel already indicated till they reached St. Paul through Stephen the Therapeut, the only passage on which the existence of Therapeuts in Apostolic times could be founded has been recently proved to be a spurious interpolation in the writings of Philo of a treatise forged several centuries after his death.[1] Research can find no trace of Therapeuts in Alexandria nor anywhere else till Monachism had become the fashion in the Christian Church. Bishop Lightfoot has convincingly proved that the theory

quotations from the Rabbinical books illustrating this Jewish belief, Kuenen in his brief criticism of Seydel adduces another from the Wisdom of Solomon viii. 20, as also rendering the Buddhist derivation of this "thought quite superfluous" (Hibbert Lectures, 1882, Appendix). Many instances of agreement in thought and phraseology with the Gospels in passages in Buddhist works are adduced by Dr. Kellogg, *Light of Asia, etc.*, p. 137 *seq.*, and are satisfactorily accounted for by the similarity of circumstances under which Buddha and the Saviour taught and the condition of men which they both perceived and described.

[1] Lucius, *Die Therapeuten und ihre Stellung in der Geschichte der Askese*, Strassburg, 1880; also *Der Essenismus in seinem Verhältniss zum Judenthum*, Strassburg, 1881.

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of the transmission of Christian doctrine from the Buddhists of India through the Babylonian Jews to the Essenes has not the slightest trace of evidence to support it, but that, on the contrary, the weight of evidence and probability is all against it.[1] Again, any one who compares the Gospel account of the life of the Baptist with the description given in Josephus[2] of the manners and tenets of the Essenes will find that just as the Essenes owed nothing to Buddha, so Christ, and even John Baptist, owed nothing to them. Though similar in a few external points, the Baptist's preaching and manner of living were essentially antagonistic to those of the little Jewish sect which had severed itself not only from Jewish society but from Jewish hopes. The teaching of Christ, again, whose manner of life, notoriously in contrast to that of His herald, was throughout a powerful though silent contradiction to every doctrine which the Essenes held, and it would be extravagant to assert that He owed to it even an illustration of His own.[3] It may be safely asserted that the theory of the derivation of Christianity from Buddhism breaks down at every point at which it is tested. We may dismiss it in the words of Professor Kuenen, that the

[1] Dissertation in Commentary on *Colossians*, pp. 119, 157.

[2] *Jewish Wars*, ii. 8. 2-13; *Antiq.* xiii. 5. 9; xv. 10. 4, 5; xviii. 1. 2-6.

[3] Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i. p. 325.

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"so-called connection between Essenism and Christianity cannot bear serious inquiry for a moment," and in those of the learned Bishop,[1] "that though the Essenes may have had some connection with Persia, their system was antagonistic to that of Buddhism in everything save the spirit of despair which called both into existence."

The whole supposition of Burnouf and De Bunsen, and writers of the school to which they belong, is based upon a most exaggerated and indeed fictitious estimate of the Indian contribution to the sum of human knowledge. It assumes that India was the cradle of all wisdom, and that from that favoured land of primeval light went forth from time to time the apostles of religion and the expounders of all philosophy. Yet history reveals not the slightest trace of any such propaganda westward before the coming of Christ, and though centuries after we have slight notices of Indian travellers to the West, we do not find a missionary among them. We have historic evidence, however, of the Western races reaching India certainly before the coming of Christ, and probably long before the birth of the founder of Buddhism, and we can hardly suppose that races with enterprise and intelligence sufficient to discover and conquer the Hindus would appear only before them as beggars

[1] Hibbert Lectures, 1882, p. 203.

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to receive their alms. We forget that the wave of Aryan humanity that poured downward into India really deflected from the path of progress, and that under climatic and other unfavourable conditions, and through intermixture with inferior races, it stagnated, while that which proceeded westward improved the more the farther it advanced. We have a tolerably clear idea of the civilisation of Western Asia in the time of Solomon, whose navy is supposed to have traded with India. It comprehended capitals with magnificent buildings, public works, and well-guarded highways; commerce protected and encouraged; law administered; religion observed, and learning cultivated. What Indian civilisation meant at the same period we can only conjecturally infer from the literature that is extant, but we have clearer glimpses of it five centuries later as the home of a mixed race, geographically severed from the rest of the world, living in village settlements, which only here and there were large enough to be called towns, divided into clans whose wealth consisted chiefly in pasture and tillage lands, and flocks and herds.[1] A kingdom in the sense in which Solomon would have used the word did not exist. In respect of civilisation Palestine was far ahead of India, and in respect of

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, translated by W. Hoey, 1882, p. 6; Williams and Norgate.

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religious development, its theology, though greatly tainted with heathen superstitions, was sufficiently pure and strong to save the Hebrew from requiring instruction at the wattle huts of a race that confounded God with His works. If Ophir be the name of an Indian port, then Solomon's navy brought back from it gold, and ivory, and curious things indicated by Sanskrit words for which the Hebrew chronicler could find no equivalent. The sailors may have picked up a few fables and riddles and proverbs, but surely in regard to religion and philosophy, the superior and stronger race would be more likely to impart of their abundance to the lower and weaker than to enrich themselves out of their poverty.

When we come to the Greek invasion we move on more solid ground, and we can handle events which have left permanent and very traceable effects; but in the historic notices that remain, we have no trace of Hindu influence upon Greek civilisation. Instead of Greek religion and philosophy being enriched by the Indian, the opposite is more likely to have been the case. The invasion of Alexander must have originated a host of new thoughts in India, which may yet be traced in the works of the prolific Buddhist scholars, who are said to have lived in the Punjab during the period of the Greek domination.[1] It is alleged with fair

[1] Dr. Joseph Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 250, 343; Trübner, 1880.

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show of reason to have given rise to some new products, such as the art of writing, a currency in coin, stone sculpture, none of which have as yet been traced in India in any previous period.[1] The appearance in India of the drama, the epic, of new views of mathematics, astronomy, physics, are all said to be subsequent to and consequences of the Greek invasion. And this is what we might expect, for all through the historical ages the Hindu, instead of enriching Western nations, has been a needy borrower from them. He has always been more ready to absorb than impart, ever greedy of foreign ideas, and ever ready to be modified by external culture. The beneficent influence of India is indeed traceable in China, whose science it undoubtedly improved, and whose literature it has greatly enriched; but with the exception of the cipher so useful in our arithmetical notation, it is questionable whether India has contributed to the stock of Western wisdom one single religious or philosophic or scientific truth.[2]

The wealthy are more likely to lend to than to borrow from the poor; the wise more likely to teach, though they do sometimes learn from the less instructed. The strong may be infected by

[1] Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, Introduction, p. 77.

[2] This must be read in the light of Professor Max Müller's *What can India teach us?*

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the diseases of the feeble, but generally the contagion of health radiates from the more robust to the weaker vitalities. The "power" which the touch of the East has "made to go forth from us"[1] no doubt flows back in quickened life upon ourselves. As these Oriental studies proceed, the tables will perhaps be turned upon the school that would derive all our philosophy and religion from old Indian sources. We have seen that two successive waves of Western life flowed eastwards upon the shores of India. Another rich stream of Semitic thought in pre-Buddhistic times, represented by such religious teachers as the second Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, reached the Tigris, and we may ask, Was the Indus unknown to them? We do not assert that they knew it, but surely it was just as easy for a Jew to reach India as for Burnouf or de Bunsen's Buddhists to reach Babylon. It was just as probable that a Jewish pedlar found his way eastward through Parthia to India, with other and more precious goods in his possession than the Babylonian wares in his pack, as it was that Renan's wandering Buddhist monk found his way to the Jordan. Later on there is a tradition —and though it is only a tradition, what a find to Messieurs Renan, Burnouf, and de Bunsen would

[1] Luke viii. 46.

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one similar Buddhist tradition be!—that one of the original twelve apostles of Jesus evangelised a portion of the western shores of India. So, founding on all these data, only assuming—as we are entitled to assume—that the East was well connected with the West by the sea routes from Arabia and by the land route through Persia, and remembering that there is nothing so volatile and permeating as thought, is the speculation so very extravagant that old Indian philosophy and religion, though following their own course, may have been modified and purified by contact with the thoughts of the West? What if the conjecture be hazarded that from the West a thousand years B.C. was communicated the theistic impulse which produced what is best in the Upanishads—the truth, viz., of the unity which is behind and above all variety, the One Absolute into which all thought and all being is resolved?[1] What if it be some day asserted that the teaching of the Hebrew prophets before the Diaspora, as to the worthlessness of sacrifice to put away sin and to promote communion with God, may have insinuated itself into

[1] Even Kuenen and Wellhausen assume as established that Monotheism shows itself with unmistakable distinctness in Hebrew prophecies of the eighth century B.C. (Hibbert Lectures, 1882, p. 119; *Theological Review*, 1874, pp. 329, 336; *Encyc. Brit.*, art. ISRAEL). Professor H. Schultz maintains that Monotheism was established in Israel from the time of Moses downward, among the leaders of thought at least. (*Alttest. Theolog.*, 2d ed., 1878, pp. 440, 457.)

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the reveries of Indian ascetics in their forest retreats, and made the teaching of reformers like Buddha possible? And what if to St. Thomas may be indirectly traced that influence which made later Buddhism differ so materially from the primitive, and approach in the similarities of its legends so close to the Gospel narratives? Dr. Kellogg already proclaims that "it may be affirmed with certainty that no man can show that the legend of Buddha, in a form containing any coincidence which could be held to argue a borrowing from it by Christians, was in existence before the Christian era"; "that all the various versions of the legend in any language date from a time later than the Christian era"; "that the chief Sanskrit authority for it cannot be proved in the judgment of the most competent critics to have existed in its present form nearly as far back as the Christian era"; and though he does not allege any actual transference from the Gospel to the Buddha legend, he avers with justifiable confidence that the opportunity for "such a transference before the Sanskrit version assumed its present form is an indubitable fact."[1]

These suggestions, though just as worthy of consideration and support as the theory that Christianity is either an offshoot of Vedic Brahminism

[1] *Light of Asia and Light of the World*, pp. 40, 102, 161.

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or a direct product of Buddhist speculation, need not be discussed at present. We may content ourselves with the conclusions formed by our most reliable authorities, that Buddhism and Christianity in their origin and earliest development were perfectly independent of each other. The births of their founders were separated by centuries, and the spheres of their ministry by almost the whole extent of Asia. While thus sundered by the conditions of both time and space, they were still more so by their intellectual peculiarities and antecedents. The Indian differed very widely from the Jew in his way of looking at and reasoning about things. He would be very differently impressed by the same or similar phenomena, and he would communicate his impressions by a very different method. Geographically India was shut up from the rest of the world, and the Aryans who went down into it were left in a manner hardly paralleled by other peoples to develop their own life out of itself, and according to its own laws. In far less favourable circumstances, and far removed from the educational stimulus of contact with alien or cognate nations, they came to stand alone as a people scarcely intelligible by others. The Jews, on the other hand, were early brought into the stream of human movement. Mingled with many peoples, sent from land to land, they became in spite of their passionate love

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for their own country the cosmopolitans of the world. Consequently when the two races came in contact, the circles of thought and feeling in which they moved could hardly be said to touch. Solomon's sailors, as regards religious or philosophical treasures, could neither give nor take away. They had almost nothing in common with the strange people whom they met. The Sanskrit words which they took home to designate the peculiar products obtained in Ophir indicated how helpless they would have been to understand the metaphysics of India even had they inquired about them. The natives of Western India a thousand years before Christ were as helpless to understand the Jew. You have only to compare a prophecy of Israel of the eighth century B.C. with the earliest of the Upanishads to find how widely separated at that date was the Semite from the Aryan of India. Even when their own kinsmen visited them, when the descendants of sires who had occupied the same cradle and had heard the same stories told over them in the one primeval home, met for deadly strife in the wars of Alexander on the plains of the Punjab, they were aliens in almost everything. Later on, when Christian missionaries, anxious to teach them better ways, succeeded in influencing their religious conceptions, the Hindus always modified what of our faith they adopted. The question how

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far the early proclamation of the Gospel in India influenced the development of Hinduism is by the best of judges considered not yet settled,[1] but even those who affirm the reality of this influence admit that Hinduism did not so much incorporate the doctrines as assimilate the ideas of Christianity. The ultimate decision of this question, however, does not in any way affect the one before us. We may be almost certain that the great mass of Indian speculation on man and his relations to the infinite, for many centuries before our era, was developed originally from the resources of the Indian mind quite apart from foreign influences. The same assertion will hold good as to the rise of Greek philosophy and of the Christian religion. Not one of the three can be understood without careful reference to their particular antecedents, but they can never be accounted for by any theory of derivation of the one from the other.

It is the fact of this complete independence of each other in origin, coupled with their analogous development, and the many supposed agreements in their systems, which makes the study of Buddhism so interesting. What does this signify? What important law in providence does it indicate or

[1] Weber, *Indische Studien*, vol. i. p. 400; J. Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, p. xxxiv; Lorinser, *Bhagavadgitâ*, Appendix, translated by Muir *in Ind. Antiq.* vol. ii. p. 283.

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illustrate? Our best guides content themselves with calling attention to the analogies, and they are chary as yet of drawing inferences from them. The wisdom of such caution is apparent when we find that the supposed coincidences require to be examined and discussed. Most of them have been found to be superficial and accidental, and, when probed, very essential and fundamental contrasts are discovered beneath them. Now to judge correctly concerning these religions we must try not their analogies but their contradictions. The analogies may be only seeming, and the contrasts may be very real and profound. On every point that is truly characteristic the two religions may be separated as widely as the zenith is from the nadir. All religions are parallel in their tendencies, and every approach to truth must inevitably produce resemblances in religious belief. The resemblances may indicate the aspirations of a moral and religious nature common to all men; and in what is peculiar to Christianity, what it possesses in contrast, may be found the divine answer to these aspirations. The two religions may proceed in parallel lines, but on very different planes, and from quite opposite directions. Thus the morality of Buddhism so deservedly admired is in no sense peculiar to Buddhism, for much of it was taught in India before Buddha appeared, and in China before his law was pro-

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claimed in it. It is the natural outgrowth of the moral sense of mankind where circumstances are favourable to its development. But high as the law of Buddha is, it only "approaches, swings toward," as Oldenberg tells us, but never reaches or touches the law of Christ.[1] There is in the Christian Gospel something which the Buddhist system plainly lacks, and which Buddhism out of any evolution of its own inherent energy could never produce. Christianity seems to be superior to it, not in the sense that the infant is superior to the embryo, but as man is superior to the animal, which yet may be said of very necessity to precede him. The lower organism in creation, though not accounting for the higher, may reach out after and indicate the necessity for it, and the higher by fulfilling the lower will interpret it. Just as the mineral, vegetable, and animal world all point to some higher creative fact, which in man is to sum up and perfect them, so the many lower religions of the human race all point to a higher, which is to annul and fulfil them. No theory of evolution has yet accounted for man. He appears in the universe as a new creature while part of a very old system of creation, and related to all its inferior forms. So Christianity, in one sense as old as human history, and related to every form

[1] *Buddha, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, translated by Wm. Hoey, 1882, p. 292.

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of religion by which man has tried to satisfy his spiritual cravings, may not be elaborated out of any of them as their products, but confronts us as a new fact of history to satisfy and complete them.

This conclusion is one which many students of the science of religion are not prepared to accept. To them Christianity is simply one of the natural religions, and at best their highest but necessary outgrowth. Just as they allege that the origin of man is to be found in the lowest type of the savage, so they seek for the genesis of his religious consciousness in his lowest animal wants and fears, and they profess to trace the development of that consciousness from its first almost shapeless forms, through the monstrosities of Fetichism, then of Animism, Polytheism, Monotheism, till it finds its ultimate culmination in Christ. Now Christianity is indeed a natural religion; were it otherwise, it would cease to be divine. It supplies all man's natural wants, and it satisfies and educates all man's natural aspirations. While, however, there is nothing *un*natural in it, we aver that there is something supranatural in its ideal, fitting it to answer the necessities of a being who has in him all that nature has, and a great deal more. Man is a being akin on one side of his nature to both the ape and the worm, but he is also what they are not. "The pressure of the infinite on his senses" awakens

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feelings, and originates a train of thought in which he soon becomes conscious of relations to a higher than nature his inferior, and to other than men his equals. There is that in him which once it is aroused refuses to believe that what he sees or handles or tastes is all, and that there can be no higher being than himself. If his own most perfect machine does not express all his intelligence, he cannot believe that all possible intelligence is comprehended and expressed in the world of nature. Behind and beyond all these physical arrangements of the world, which seem fully to meet the lower wants of his being, he feels that there must be higher arrangements corresponding to his peculiar wants. Just because he finds every appetite has its corresponding object, and every organ implies an element for which it is fitted,—so that if there be an eye there must be light, and if lungs there must be air,—so this feeling or instinct which impels him to seek the unknown Power, "for whose sake he feels constrained to do what he does not like to do, or to abstain from what he would like to do,"[1] is the pledge not only that He exists, but that he has already and always been found by Him, as One who understands perfectly his thoughts and wants, and is freely communicating with him.

It is not in the anthropoid ape that we may

[1] Müller, Gifford Lectures, *Natural Religion*, p. 169.

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hope to find the origin of man, and it is not in the terror of the savage cowering before the majesty and mystery of nature that we are likely to find the genesis of his religion. Even if anthropology succeeded in proving that savagery was the first type in which humanity was expressed, and that its bestial rites inspired by terror was the first form of human religion, it would not then have accounted for their origin. The gulf between the religious savage and the non-religious speechless ape would remain as vast as ever. The first manifested beginning of a work may be rude enough, "as is the rough block which receives the first stroke of the sculptor who has designed to produce a statue; but the real beginning," as we have been eloquently reminded, "is in the plan of the artist, and to perceive his ideal we have to wait for the final result."[1] It is in the end therefore that we may be said to find and understand the author. So the origin of man, and the genesis of his religion, is more likely to be indicated by that divine fiat which one of the ancient authors of Genesis has dared to formulate, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." According to that conception, man is a creature, neither equal with, nor perfect as the Being who conceived him, but having affinity with his Creator, and from the

[1] Dr. Caird, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 343 *seq.*

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very first manifesting capacity and potentiality of indefinite progress to be gained by the divine education to which he is everlastingly subjected.

It is not in the plan of our lecture to discuss these momentous questions, or to enter the lists against the representatives of the sciences of Anthropology or Religion. Anthropology is not sufficiently advanced to scatter the mystery that surrounds the cradle of the human race: and it would be rash for the apostles of the other science to maintain that they have succeeded in tracing the lines of that process, out of which Christianity or even Buddhism is alleged to have evolved from the shapeless superstitions of the primitive savage, before they confront us as facts in the history of human thought. Observation and experience alike seem to counsel greater caution in making our deductions and drawing our inferences. Indeed there seems to be almost as much evidence in favour of the theory of degradation as there is in favour of that of evolution. There is no inherent tendency in human society to pass ever on and ever up to something better and nobler. No race, by its own inherent strength, seems to have raised itself from barbarism into anything that can be called true civilisation; but we have abundant proof in the Aztecs of former generations, and the negroes of the Black Republic in the present day, that

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races can terribly decline. A state of civilisation is very difficult to keep, as well as difficult to gain.[1] And so far as observation goes, savage life and religion appear to be "not the dawning of a society about to rise, but the fading remains of one sinking in storms, overthrown and shattered by overwhelming catastrophes." Humboldt and Niebuhr, quoted by Whately in his lecture on the Origin of Civilisation, both protest as strongly as he did himself against those who profess to find in the wreck of the civilised and religious man his original representative,[2] and our best authority in the science of religion assures us that Fetichism, far from being the initial of an upward course, marks the very last stage in the downward course of religion.[3] It should content us, in the present state of our knowledge, to find that humanity is capable both of development and degradation. Savagery and civilisation are not separated from each other by impassable barriers: savagery is at least a possibility to a civilised race;[4] civilisation is not beyond the reach of the savage. On the surface of the very highest civilisation many things appear

[1] Sir A. Mitchell, Rhind Lectures for 1876 and 1878, *The Past in the Present*, pp. 207, 214; Edinburgh, Douglas, 1880.

[2] Whately, *Political Economy*, p. 68.

[3] Max Müller, Gifford Lectures, *Natural Religion*, p. 54.

[4] The savagery of a great city is in some aspects more awful than that of Africa.

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which are also to be seen in the lowest: and just as in the lowest organisms certain rudimentary traces are found of members which are perfected in organisms above them, so the very lowest savagery seems to exhibit an upward tendency. In the same way the very purest religions have clinging to them traces of the lowest superstitions. Not in Buddhism only, but even in Christianity, we find forms of Animism and Fetichism; but the question whether both religions first manifested themselves in these lower forms, with which they are still partly incrusted, must not be held to be settled in the affirmative because these traces of them exist. Instead of being survivals which they have not yet sloughed off or outgrown, they may be parasitical growths indicating degradation and disease.

Though the researches hitherto prosecuted have not resulted in the discovery of a law regulating the development of religion,[1] they all point to a common religious faculty peculiar to man, and indicate that the religious instinct is co-extensive with the human race. Nothing, it is true, in the nature of things forbids the discovery of tribes absolutely without religion; but as matter of fact, no such have been found. And as Tylor remarks, "those who assert the contrary disprove their

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, p. 10.

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theories by the facts which they allege in support of them."[1] Now, if we find in all sections of humanity, even far apart from each other, the same groping after an Author and Governor of our being, and the same forecasting of our destiny, though in most contradictory, and, alas! often fearfully perverted ways, we may safely infer as a fundamental truth that humanity, though broken up into many fragments, is really an organic unity, and that the Christian dogma simply expresses a scientific fact, "that God hath made of one all nations on the face of the earth."

If the organic unity of humanity be granted, the organic unity of language and of religion too would seem to be deducible from it as simple corollaries. But we must be careful in defining wherein this organic unity consists. We may assume that in regard to language it does not consist in a perfect primitive speech, broken up at later times into numberless forms to be used richly and copiously by some civilised, but scantily by barbarous peoples.[2] In regard to religion it does not mean a complete compendium of truth supernaturally given to the fathers of the human race, from which, while all men have erred more or less, some have fearfully fallen away. Such a view,

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i. p. 380.

[2] Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 41; *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 254.

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though held generally once, would be condemned by Christian theologians now as irreligious in principle, for it would seek for the roots of religion not in the nature of man, but in some external enactment, and would make religion, which is essentially spontaneous, to be something mechanical or compulsory in action.[1] The unity of language does not consist in a common vocabulary, but in a common faculty which all men have of expressing their feelings and their thoughts; and the unity of religion does not consist in a number of fundamental beliefs which all men have in common; but in the universal instinct to believe in, and reverence and obey, a power higher and better than ourselves. The faculty, the instinct in each case is one; yet it has been developed, if we are to use that word, in very different degrees. In some tribes the faculty of reckoning is so weak, that they have numerals only to five, and their vocabulary is so poor as to express only objects around them or their own sensuous wants. In the same way in some peoples the religious faculty is so stunted as almost to be amorphous. It exists as it were in embryo; in other peoples it perplexes us by the monstrosities in which it is expressed, but the monstrosity, as we are reminded,[2]

[1] Fairbairn, *Studies in Religion and Philosophy*, p. 13.

[2] Baring Gould, *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, vol. i. p. 109.

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may mark a further growth which also points onward to something more complete, and may be in itself a type of things not seen as yet. Observation therefore seems to detect a religious tendency in process of evolution, and if so, the only question is as to whether that tendency develops by its own inherent power, or by a process of education intelligently conducted; in other words, whether man grows into his religion, or whether he is instructed in it by the revelation of a mind higher than his own.

The New Testament writers, while proclaiming the organic unity of humanity, proclaim as clearly that the organic development of religion proceeds under Divine control. The phrase "organic development of religion" may only be a modern way of designating that long continuous process by which God reveals His mind and will for the education of the human race, which culminated when He "who at sundry times and in divers manners," in various ways and in different measures, "spake unto the fathers by the prophets," spoke unto us by His Son. Holy Scripture from first to last is consistent in its teaching as to this. It tells of a Divine Spirit not operative only in one race or in one part of the world during a few centuries of its history, but striving with human souls always and everywhere. It tells us that God never left the world without a witness of Himself; it reminds us

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of prophets—certainly not all of the one nation—who, trained to grasp and to proclaim moral and spiritual truths, were sent to lead among their fellow-men lives so pure and unselfish as profoundly to affect the moral progress of the whole human race. In a word, it reveals Deity not as apart from man and uninterested in him, but as an everlasting agent in human history,—working out an eternal purpose hid as a mystery from all ages, but now manifested in the last times to us; the purpose of gathering together not only the scattered and alienated nations, but "all things which are in heaven and which are on earth in One," even in Christ.

The proclamation of this universality of the Divine purpose is one of the chief distinctive characteristics of Christianity. Its canonical Scriptures from beginning to end contradict the Jewish heresy, that God, though He has made of one all nations, has only taken one or two under His protection, and has no care for the rest. They tell us that God cares for the sparrow that flits over the heads of the most degraded of the human race, and for the worm that crawls under their feet; and by implication they warn us that to assert that He who has provided for the wants of the reptile and the bird has made no provision for the spiritual wants of those whom He is said to have made in His image, is blasphemy more heinous than ever heathen or atheist has

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uttered. "The same Lord over all is rich in mercy unto all," and "He is not far from any one" of them. He has left none "without a witness." Though He has given some more than others, He has left no one without something. The religious instinct in some He has specially trained and illuminated, not because He regards them as favourites—for He is no respecter of persons—but because through them He would work out His beneficent plan for all. A few are indeed chosen, but that many may be called, and when one individual or one people is selected and peculiarised, it is that through them all nations may be blessed.

St. Paul, quoting to the Athenians from one of their own poets, reminded them that "we are all His offspring," and as such we are all divinely cared for. It is true that He does not deal with all after the same fashion, and His dealings will always be perplexing if we apply to them only the standard of man and the measures of time; but if we remember that "He is God, and not man," that "His years are throughout all generations," and that we "can see only a portion of His ways," we may trust that by-and-by He will show that He has wasted neither His own patience nor His creatures' strength. For though He may not be dealing with us after the same fashion, He is dealing with all toward the same blessed end, the end which He has revealed in

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Christ, through whom, and by whom, and in whom, all men and things are to be reconciled.

We can only judge of His purpose by what of it has been disclosed. Humanity, essentially and fundamentally one, exhibits most manifold variety. While the unity of the race secures its sympathy with all its members, in its variety there is secured its indefinite expansion and progress. No family could always keep together in one spot: the differences of disposition and character among its members demand their separation as the condition of harmony. The family of man is a scattered one, not merely to prevent jealousy and hostility between its members, but to promote their education. The training of the race seems to proceed on principles somewhat analogous to those which we ourselves have adopted in the education of our children. We never could hope to educate a large number of children of various ages and mental capacities, by keeping them all in one class; so we break them up, and isolate, and grade them, and train some of them specially for the sake of all, that they may be their leaders and teachers. Even so, we find nations widely separated by natural barriers, that the characteristic energies of each may be developed, till the time comes when one or other of them is needed for the elevation or reformation of the rest. That the division of nations

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and the separate training of nations entered deeply into the counsels of Providence, may be learned by a glance at the configuration of the world, and the influences which are exercised by soil and climate and circumstance upon any single nation. The blessed effect of this division may be seen by the slightest survey of history in the corrective, educative, redemptive influence which they have exercised upon each other.[1] And yet a survey of the history of the last eighteen centuries will just as plainly indicate a Divine purpose of drawing the nations toward unity. Babel may mark the Divine purpose of the primeval economy, and Pentecost may be the sign of the present. The wonder in the plain of Shinar was, that through diversity of speech men were ceasing to understand each other. The wonder in Jerusalem was, that men of the most widely separate nationalities heard, each in their own tongue, Christian evangelists proclaim the marvellous works of God. Religion, which up till the coming of Christ, had proved a repellent and divisive force, began at that time to prove an attractive, harmonising, and transforming power. A new spring-tide dawned upon man's religious concep-

[1] "Nations," says Professor Goldwin Smith, "redeem each other. They preserve for each other principles, truths, and hopes, and aspirations which, committed to the keeping of one, might become extinct for ever. They thus not only raise each other again when fallen, but they prevent each other from falling."—*Lectures on the Study of History*, delivered in Oxford 1859-61, p. 71.

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tions, and truths after which all had been groping, but which none had attained to, emerged grandly into prominence. The Fatherhood of the One living and eternal God, the Divine Son, in whom all men are brethren, and the Holy Spirit, dealing with every man, working upon him and in him to conform him to the likeness of the highest and best, began to be revealed; and the more that revelation is accepted the more the reconciliation of the race advances.

It is not our interest, therefore, to sever Christianity from all connection with the manifold forms in which the religious instinct and faculty of man has found expression. If it could be proved that our religion stands in no relation to anything which men in other religions thought or believed, it would be discovered defective, and we would have to abandon the claim that it is the universal religion of humanity. To assert that all previous religious ideas must be expunged as erroneous or false, so that an entirely new message might be written, is to contradict the evangelical doctrine as to the nature of Christ and the purpose of His mission to the world. The New Testament writers assert that Christ is the source of all the truth that was ever uttered, the inspirer of all the goodness that was ever seen, and that He is the stimulator and educator of man's every reaching out after God. The noblest thinkers, it is true, failed to comprehend the truth, and their

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highest religion failed to satisfy them; but we must not think of them as divinely permitted to fail to teach us the glory of Christ as the ultimate revelation of God. Here, as in all similar cases, failure was rather a partial success; for by the effort to reach it the mind was trained to receive and grasp the reality when it was disclosed. Some one has said that all pre-Christian religions are just Christ partially—very very partially—realised. Certainly they all point to Him, and but for Him they would have been abortive. They all suggest Him, in respect that they each claim something to satisfy and unite them. Christianity thus proves itself Divine, not in being absolutely different from, nor even in being vastly superior to, but in the fact that it harmonises and completes them. Instead, therefore, of being scared by the resemblances to Christianity which we meet in other religions, we should be thankful for their discovery. The early Apologists were not frightened when Celsus,[1] in the second century, submitted his alleged parallels to Christian doctrine and ethics, in order to prove that what Christians called revelation had already been attained by the unassisted efforts of heathen minds. Anticipating the language of the eighteenth century

[1] Celsus, quoting our Lord's saying, Matt. xix. 24, and the exhortation to forgive our enemies, Matt. v. 43, 45, alleged they were transferred and coarsely perverted from Plato, *de Legibus*, and *Crito*. —Origen, *contra Celsum*, Book vi. chaps. 15, 16, and Book vii. chap. 61.

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Deists, he proclaimed that "Christianity was as old as creation." His parallels were often found to be defective, and many of them had only to be looked at to show the immense superiority of the Christian quotations. Augustine turned them against himself, when he showed that to claim entire originality for Christianity, to deny the existence of any light before Christ came, and the possibility of any silent universal revelation through reason and conscience, was to contradict His Messiahship. To ignore what God had done before, would have cut Him off from God and man. We would expect the Son of Man to confirm the deepest convictions of the human race. We would expect the Son of God to claim and utilise all the truth God's Spirit had spoken in ages past. "Siquis vera loquitur, prior est quam ipse veritas? O Homo, attende Christum, non quando ad te venerit, sed quando te fecerit."[1]

The more of Christian doctrine and ethics we find in other religions, the more Divine will Christianity appear. There is not a truth which has verified and sustained any other religion which is not found in Christianity, in fuller amount and in clearer form. Christianity differs from all other religions, not because it is a purer system of moral

[1] *Enarr. in Psalm.* cxl. 6. Clement of Alexandria regarded Greek philosophy as a *προπαιδεία* or preparatory discipline for the reception of Christian truth, *Strom.* vi. chap. 8, and as a step to something higher, *ὑποβάθραν οὖσαν τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν φιλοσοφίας*, *Strom.* vi. chap. 17.

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truth, but because it is the manifestation of a Divine life, and because in that life it reveals the *power* which alone can reconcile the knowing with the doing of duty. It professes only to have one original, one distinctive element; but how much is involved in that profession? for this original is Christ Himself, and all its doctrines and precepts are vital only because of their connection with Christ. Whole libraries of moral and doctrinal anthologies would not make up for the obliteration of His likeness from the religious consciousness of the world: "It would be like consoling ourselves for the loss of the sun by the kindling of ten thousand artificial lamps."[1] He confronts the ages, as the One to whom all religions point, of whom all true prophets of the human race have unconsciously testified. They, like the Founder of this great religion, whose alleged resemblances will be found, as we examine them, to be rather point-blank contradictions and contrasts to the Christian doctrines and story, may have indeed been burning and shining lights, and men were willing for a season to rejoice in their light. They were "not that Light," but as voices crying in the night for its arising they came to "bear witness of it": the Light not of Asia only, nor yet only of Europe, but the "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

[1] Trench, Hulsean Lectures for 1846, p. 153.

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LECTURE II.

THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY, AND THE EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE SCRIPTURES.

It should be an advantage to the study of Buddhism that even in its origin it confronts us as the religion of a people sufficiently advanced in civilisation to be able to formulate their metaphysical conceptions and present us with their religious beliefs organised in a system. Like Christianity it not only inherited but also produced a considerable and very miscellaneous literature, whose contents throw valuable light upon the past from which it emerged and upon the course which it followed, and like Christianity it has left its stamp on most of the institutions of the peoples among whom it was successfully propagated. When all these sources of information have been properly investigated, we may hope that the story of the rise and progress of Buddhism in the East will

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be revealed with something at least of the clearness with which the history of Christianity is disclosed by the literature and art of the West.

To trace, however, the dawn and spread of Buddhism with anything like historical accuracy for the first six or seven hundred years of its course, is a task as yet beyond the literary ability of the times. It is doubtful whether the materials for such a work have as yet been collected, and he would be a bold man who would claim for the task of sifting what has already been furnished more than an earnest beginning. Not even Saint-Hilaire would now repeat the assertion so confidently made thirty years ago,[1] that "no new discoveries can change our conclusions regarding it"; for during the past generation the effect of fuller information has been not only to modify, but in several instances to revolutionise the theories formed concerning it. Discoveries are multiplying every year; and, though the knowledge thus acquired serves often more to reveal difficulties than to solve them, we may be thankful that the examination of them is engaging the attention of the highest order of scholarship, and hopeful, yea, even confident that since so many of the ablest and most patient minds are turned in this direction, the aggregate of progress will speedily be immense.

[1] Introduction to *Le Bouddha et sa Religion*; Paris, 1858.

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All that we know of Buddhism, and all that we are likely to know of it, is to be gathered from its own Scriptures; and a comparison of these with the Christian Scriptures reveals at the very outset a difference amounting to a vast contrast between them. The original Scriptures of Christianity have been before the tribunal of the world's keenest and most hostile criticism for 1800 years; but we are only now beginning to make the acquaintance of the Scriptures of Buddhism, which have hardly been subjected to any cross-questioning worthy of the name. Those who have ventured to assail have only published their inability to understand them, and those most competent to criticise may be pardoned if they handle tenderly the fragments which they are collecting and translating for our use. The services which they are thus rendering to religion as well as to science are very great. Previously we had only anthologies extracted often without reference to date or authorship or connection to judge from, but now these learned pundits are furnishing us with books containing not only the wisdom and beauties of Eastern literature, but its follies and blemishes as well. Omitting only what is obscene and offensive to the moral sense,[1] they are giving us specimens of several strata of Oriental thought and belief,

[1] Müller, Introd. to *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i. p. xxi.

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vertically and thoroughly cut, from which a correct understanding of the essential features of this very peculiar religion may with considerable probability be ascertained.

Only a portion of the Buddhist Scriptures are as yet available, and these we are certainly not at liberty to place side by side as of equal evidential value with the contents of the New Testament. It is said that two thousand manuscripts of the New Testament, or of portions of it, have been discovered, several of which are of great antiquity, and notwithstanding the immense number of various readings on points of detail, the text of the oldest corresponds substantially with that of the books as we have them to-day. We are informed, however, on the best authority, that "all Indian manuscripts are comparatively modern, that no manuscript written one thousand years ago is now existent in India, and that it is almost impossible to find one written five hundred years ago; for most manuscripts which claim to be of that date are merely copies of old ones, the dates of which are repeated by the copyists."[1] It is admitted, moreover, that the literary honesty of these Indian translators and copyists is very questionable, that the books of the Buddhists have undergone whole-

[1] A. Burnell, *Indian Antiq.*, 1880, p. 223, quoted by Prof. Max Müller in Introduction to vol. x. of *Sacred Books of the East*, p. xi.

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sale textual alterations, that none of the Sanskrit works as yet known to us are unadulterated specimens of transmitted doctrines, that the oldest and most reliable authorities for the life of Buddha exaggerate greatly events which are said to have happened, and ascribe to him long discourses of which the writers themselves were the composers.[1] In respect, therefore, of literary accuracy and faithfulness of purpose, these old compilers and re-editors of the Buddhist books are far below the standard which criticism has inexorably applied to the versionists of the Christian Scriptures.

The faithfulness of our English versions is vouched for by the names of the translators, and yet they admit that their translations are only approximations.[2] From the very nature of the case they must be so. The East is very far distant from the West; its ways are not our ways; its thoughts are not our thoughts. Some one has said that "the *Iliad* is separated from the *Rig Veda* by an interval of several civilisations"; and if so, how vast must be the gulf separating Vedic and even Buddhist metaphysicians from the British philosopher of to-day! It is simply im-

[1] Frankfurter, Appendix to Wordsworth's Bampton Lectures for 1881; *The One Religion*, p. 340; Eitel *Lectures on Buddhism*, p. 44; Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 232.

[2] Prof. Max Müller, Introduction to vol. i. of *Sacred Books of the East*, p. xxvii.

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possible for the most impartial translator to put himself in the place of the ancient Indian sage, and to prevent his own preconceptions from insinuating themselves among the data with which he has to deal. He has to express, as we have been reminded, "a lower order of ideas in a higher order of terms, and use words suggesting a wealth of analysis and association quite foreign to the thought to be reproduced. Translation from a lower to a higher language is thus a process of elevation."[1] In reading these translations and the books founded upon them, we have constantly to guard against giving to such terms as "sin," "lust," "salvation," "law," "church," and many others, our Christian conceptions of them. We are often perplexed whether the phrases employed, and even the very titles of the treatises, be really the equivalents of the ancient texts and titles, or nineteenth century conceptions of what they may be made to mean. A European scholar inheriting the results of ages of Christian culture may be more likely to interpret the reach of an old Buddhist expression than the monk who first used it; but he is always in danger of confounding that reach with his own firm grasp of truth, and of expressing his conceptions by phraseology

[1] A. E. Gough, *Philosophy of the Upanishads, etc.*, p. 5; Trübner's Oriental Series.

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which, if it could be explained to the ancient, would be rejected by him as inconsistent with his original meaning.

Another strong contrast between the two sets of scriptures emerges when we attempt to fix the dates at which the earliest Buddhist works were produced. The New Testament is admitted by authorities who cannot be accused of prejudice in favour of Christianity and even by antichristian critics, to contain the actual writings of some of the original disciples of Jesus. The very latest of the books which compose it was in circulation within a century after His death, while the great bulk of them were accepted before half a century had passed as the testimonies of those who were eye-witnesses of the rise of our religion.[1] M. Renan admits that the three Synoptical Gospels are the "tender remembrances and simple narratives of the first and second generations of Christians, written in substantially their present form by the men whose names they bear."[2] The

[1] This statement is hazarded, notwithstanding the recent reply of the author of *Supernatural Religion* to Bishop Lightfoot's Essays. It will be generally conceded that he has adopted an untenable position, and that, though his rejoinder to the learned Bishop may be a vigorous assault, it is weak criticism. Sanday's work on *The Gospels in the Second Century* is on the whole a better reply than the Bishop's to the allegations of the author of *Supernatural Religion*, whose extreme scepticism of literary evidence is quite equalled by his dogmatic extravagance of statement.

[2] *Vie de Jésus*, Introd. pp. xv, xvii, 4th ed.; Paris, 1863.

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epistle of St. James and several of the epistles of St. Paul are almost now unanimously accepted as the products of the first generation. Mons. E. Burnouf therefore may safely aver that "the history of Christian doctrine and worship bears the crown over all others in respect that its records are complete."[1] What of these records are comprised in the New Testament, though tried by the severest of tests, continues to-day as they were eighteen centuries ago delivered to the Church. Though the various readings in the MSS. are said to be counted by 200,000, hardly one of them can be said to affect a fundamental doctrinal or historical statement; and so outstanding and distinct is their canonical character that it requires no external authority, but only comparison with them, to disclose what of early Christian literature is to be regarded as apocryphal.

The evidence on which Orientalists have to rely in fixing the date of the Buddhist scriptures is confessedly such "that we must not be surprised if those who are accustomed to test historical and chronological evidence in reference to Greece and Rome declined to be convinced by it."[2] For centuries after the death of Buddha his followers assure us that they had no written books consti-

[1] *Science de Religions*, pp. 12, 20.

[2] Professor Max Müller, Introd. to Dhammapada, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. p. x.

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tuting their rules of faith and manners. The earliest written collection of which in their own records we have any historical trace is that of Ceylon, and all that can be said of it is "that there is nothing improbable" that part of it may have been reduced to writing about the first century B.C., but the whole was only fixed about 420 A.D. The Nepaulese collection is said to date only from the first Christian century; but it is not alleged that the whole of the works now in it were even then in existence. According to their own tradition, they had no written biography of Buddha till about the first century of our era, and no one who has examined that narrative or read the opinions expressed by Orientalists as to the date when it was produced—opinions so divergent as to indicate a difference of several centuries—would ever dream of employing it as evidence of what is alleged in it to have happened. It is simply impossible, therefore, to regard the Buddhist's Pitakas as if they were of similar authoritative value with the New Testament, for, in fact, in respect of canonical worth they do not deserve to be ranked with much of our later patristic literature.

A very high antiquity, however, is claimed by Buddhists for these collections. According to the Dipavanso, their earliest available chronicle, dating

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only from the fifth century A.D., the doctrines orally communicated by Buddha to his disciples were by them immediately after his death revised and classified under the three divisions of Vinaya, Abhidharma, and Sutta, in which they have always since then been preserved. This collection having passed through the crucible of a council held at Vaisali a hundred years later, was fixed as canonical at another held in the reign of Asoka about 242 B.C. It is urged that a canon, to be authoritative, does not require to be written, and that Indians claim for one orally transmitted higher authority than for one transcribed. The art of writing was probably unknown in India in Buddha's time, and so, thrown back upon their resources, memory was by the Indians cultivated to an extent which enabled them to dispense with methods deemed by nearly all other peoples to be essential to accuracy. Eminent Orientalists therefore, while regarding the account of the first council as apocryphal, are yet inclined to admit—from the identity of the threefold division in all the schools that have been tested, from the similarity of the titles of the contents of all the various collections, and especially from the quality of the writings themselves—that the tradition recorded in the Dipavanso is well founded, and that considerable portions of the Vinaya and Sutta literature may date from a hundred years after the death of Buddha.

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In assuming so much, however, these scholars by no means believe that they have found in these texts the actual teaching of Buddha in an unadulterated condition. While not thinking it possible to impugn the substantial accuracy of the Vinaya texts, though given in Pali translations of the lost dialect in which they were originally preached, they tell us that the oldest of the Sutta texts are "not his teachings nor the teachings of his immediate disciples, who could not have spoken of him in the manner in which he is there described. They are only founded on his teachings, and record existing beliefs as to the doctrines which he actually taught." [1] For "the fundamental and original doctrines they may be accepted as fairly trustworthy authorities," but for the facts of his life they are even at the best very questionable guides. Nearer to the origin of Buddhism and of the person of its founder we are not likely to get than in the book entitled by its translator the Sutta of the Great Decease; but he confesses that even in it we are standing on anything but solid ground, and that we are only able to catch a distant and most uncertain glimpse of the figure of the great Teacher as he comes out at rare intervals from the mist of legends which, designed to adorn and magnify, have in reality diminished and obscured his real personality.

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii. p. 37; Introd., vol. xi. p. xx.

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For our knowledge of Buddhism, therefore, we have for centuries only oral traditions to rely upon. Of these traditions only a portion may be traced approximately to the times of Buddha, and of the fragments which can possibly be traced not one contains a narrative nor any historical reference to passing events. On the contrary, our knowledge of the origin of Christianity is derived not from fragments of oral tradition, but from a set of canonical writings, many of them traceable close to the generation that witnessed Christ's death, in which the story of His ministry is set in historical relation to the age in which He appeared, and His peculiar doctrines are so fixed that any addition to them is at once recognised as spurious. Between the extremes of criticism as to the period covered by the life of Christ there is a difference of only half a dozen years; but there is a difference in Buddhist traditions of more than a thousand years as to the date of Buddha's birth, and even European scholars, after carefully sifting traditions and writings, have only been able approximately to fix dates for his death ranging over a period of 175 years.[1]

For historical accuracy, therefore, the traditions are as worthless as they are for any photographic presentation of the various persons who figure in

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 27.

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them. In truth we have in them neither chronology nor biography. Events and actors are equally indistinct; we have only a background without any perspective, and pasteboard puppets projected against it which might be designated by any name whatever. Even in respect of transmission of doctrine, oral tradition was found very early to have failed. The reason given in their chronicles for resorting to writing is confession sufficient that they considered that method of preserving the deposit of the faith a safer one.[1] So divergent had the renderings and so corrupt had the texts become—"for even the monks of the great council were blamed for turning the religion upside down, for distorting the sense and teaching of the five Nikayas, for casting aside that Sutta and Vinaya, and making imitations of them changing this to that[2]—that the profoundly wise priests, foreseeing the perdition of the people (from the perversion of the doctrines), and in order that the religion might endure for ages, wrote the same in books."[3] Before this time the many schisms which had arisen were powerful illustrations of the evils which the "profoundly wise" transcribers deplored,

[1] Mahavansa, by Turnour; Dipavansa, xx. 20, quoted by Professor Max Müller in *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. x. p. xxiv, and xiii. p. xxxv.

[2] *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. i. p. lvii; Trübner's Oriental Series.

[3] Weber, *Indian Literature*, p. 294; *ibid.*

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and of that falling away from the original creed which this religion had already suffered for lack of a secured basis of faith.[1]

For the want of an authoritative standard told very severely against the early history of Buddhism. Its rapid and widespread extension was due, not so much to the natural development of its own principles as to its assimilation of the external and foreign influences with which it came in con-

[1] We may safely assert that in the mass of Buddhist literature already available nothing has been found, nor is anything at all likely to be found, corresponding in character and evidential value to the Christian Scriptures. What would the New Testament have been, asks Professor Müller, "if the spurious Gospels, the pseudo-apostolic and post-apostolic productions, the debates of the Councils, the commentaries of the Fathers, and the lives of the saints, had all been bound and mixed up with it"? (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i., Introd., pp. xv, xvi.) And yet this is a parallel to the confusion represented by the so-called Buddhist Bible. In truth, it is not a Bible, but a library, containing not only the earliest treatises, but the commentaries upon them made in later ages, and extracts and repetitions from itself so extensive and numerous that were they omitted this portentous collection—four times as voluminous as our Christian Bible—would be found to be much shorter than it. When the original Bible of Buddhism has been disinterred from this pile it will be found to resemble almost in nothing our New Testament, but it may present many analogies to the Talmud and Targums, and perhaps some very interesting resemblances to isolated portions of the Old Testament. As far as it has been translated to us, the Tripitaka contain neither prophecy nor history; but one division of it presents suggestive coincidences with portions of the apocryphal Scriptures; and scholars may find a comparison of some of the texts of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes with those of the Dhammapada and some of the Suttas an agreeable and not unprofitable study, without in the least being tempted to transfer their allegiance from the Hebrew to the Indian sages.

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tact. Its advance was the result more of compromise than of conquest.[1] It welcomed or tolerated, at least it could not or did not defend itself against the introduction of many parasitical germs which were destined to arrest its growth and pass into its life. As the ivy covers and adorns the oak only to suck away with its million mouths its strength, so the popular beliefs which Buddhism incorporated from without, as well as the defections from the original teaching which took place within it, produced very soon upon it alterations so extensive that its founder would have disclaimed or would have been really unable to recognise it as his own.

No temptation happened to Buddhism, however, but such as is common to all the higher religions. As far as observation and experience go, the lower types of religion continue unchanged; but those that confront us upon a higher level are in a perpetual flux, in which change does not always indicate progress. Instead of tracing their path by the superstitions which they have outgrown, their course may be indicated by those which they have incorporated. Man, in his exodus of faith, is always tempted to go back to the condition from which he has emerged, or to fall away to the

[1] Eitel, *Lectures on Buddhism*, p. 6; Hunter, "Historical Aspects of Indian Geography," *Scot. Geog. Mag.*, Dec. 1888.

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religions by which he is surrounded. Mosaism and Christianity had to pass through this trial, and certainly they did not pass through it unscathed. They suffered from the corruption of popular superstitions and of Pagan rites, all of which, as in the case of Buddhism, were defended by an appeal to tradition. Just as every Buddhist innovator was ready with some forgotten saying or Sutta alleged to have been delivered by the "Blessed One," sometimes miraculously preserved through the ages till the necessity for the revelation arose, so the Popes and the Fathers of Christendom were never at a loss for authorities when, professing to develop and define, they in reality were adding to the faith and the worship and the claims of the Church.

But Christianity from the very earliest possessed what Buddhism for a long period lacked. In its canonical writings it conserved not only a check upon this apostasy, but a security for reformation. Mechanical though it seems, there was a providence in the early committal to writing of such books as compose our Bibles. In the fact that their successive disclosures of truth were thus registered there is more significance than at first appears. It is admitted by all that man's progress depends in no small degree on his ability to secure and hand down the treasures of his

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wisdom and experience. The art of writing is thus recognised to be one of the most moving powers in the world. The nations that have depended upon it for the transmission of knowledge inherited or acquired, have certainly made more progress in religion and civilisation than those that have neglected or despised it. It is significant that the writers of the Bible have all recognised this condition of human progress, and that many of them have represented themselves as instructed by the Divine authority, from whom they profess to have received their communications, to make them permanent in popular language and in plain written form.[1]

In the history of the Hebrews there is not a single recorded instance of religious reformation in which the law and the testimony, or the scrolls of the prophets, did not play an important part. In like manner the New Testament, which embodies the ideals and perpetuates the standard which is to regulate its course, not only saved Christianity from the perils which threatened its earliest spread, but has often rescued it from the degradation into which it has fallen. Canonical books may only give, as it has been said, "the reflected image of the real doctrines of the founder of a religion, an image always blurred and distorted

[1] Rogers, *Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, Lecture v.

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by the medium through which it has to pass";[1] but in the case of the New Testament the Church has never developed, or thought it possible to develop, a purer reflection. Advance as it may, the Church never can outgrow the ideals of its youth, and change what it pleases, it never can improve them. Whenever the Church assumed supremacy over its law, and whenever tradition superseded its testimony, it yielded to the disintegrating influences of heathenism. It was rapidly lapsing into polytheism when Mohammed rose with a spurious and mutilated version of the Scriptures to recall it to the witness of true Scriptures to the unity and sovereignty of God. Later on, when sinking through formalism into superstition and sorcery almost as degrading as any Indian, Luther, by the re-discovery of the Greek Testament, brought about a reformation which not only saved Europe, but has created a new Western and Southern world. In every revival and every advance which has taken place since then there may be traced, directly or indirectly, the regenerative influences of the Christian originals. On its human side the Christian Church will always be in danger of losing its pure conceptions and noble aims in grosser forms of belief and in lower ambi-

[1] Professor Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 103.

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tions; but high over all its degradation towers in its early Scriptures the majesty and spirituality of its Divine authority, and we have only to look up to be first convicted, then attracted and redeemed. The purest sections of the Christian Church, the surest and the first to outgrow all unworthy expressions of Christianity, are those which adhere most closely to the original rule of faith and worship. It is quite possible that we "may be only too apt to make a fetich of our sacred books";[1] but somehow the Christian communities that most revere their sacred books show that they are least likely to fall into this danger. The more we obey the Scriptures, the less likely are we to idolise them. The New Testament, so far from attaching any mystical or talismanic value to its contents, tells us that the letter killeth, and the spirit alone giveth life. It is otherwise with the Buddhist Tripitaka. Its authors claim meritorious efficacy not only for the repetition of its sentences, but for the very sound of its words, "as if they were capable of elevating every one who hears them to heavenly abodes in future existence." Sir Monier Williams has illustrated this by a legend long current, not in northern Buddhist countries, but in Ceylon, where a purer Buddhism prevails. According to it, two monks were heard by five

[1] Professor Müller, Gifford Lectures, *Natural Religion*, p. 564.

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hundred bats reciting in a cave the law of Buddha, and they by merely hearing gained such merit that in death they were re-born as men, and ultimately through successive re-births were raised to the fellowship of the gods.[1] Of course this is simply a legend, a thing of hay or straw that has got mixed with the purer primitive faith ; but it indicates that the course of the current flows in quite an opposite direction from the faith which allows itself to be dominated and guided by the canon of Holy Scriptures.

The quality of the contents of the two sets of writings is not under discussion, but we cannot help remarking one characteristic of the Christian Scriptures which is not likely to emerge in our longest acquaintance with the Buddhist books. No one ever expects that the genuineness of the contents of the Tripitaka will ever be discussed with anything like the intensity and acerbity with which we have discussed the genuineness of the books of the Bible. The long and fierce contendings that have been waged over each portion of the Gospels will never take place over any of the Suttas. We have been working for five centuries to secure a proper English translation of the Holy Bible, and we are not satisfied with it yet: does any one

[1] *Record of Missionary Conference in London*, 1888, vol. i. p. 39 ; also his *Buddhism*, p. 558.

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expect a similar expenditure of labour to secure a proper version of the Tripitaka? It is possible that scholarship will by and by exhaust this particular field of Oriental research, and "having catalogued its discoveries will put them aside and proceed to more interesting studies"; but though men have quarrelled about and questioned the Holy Scriptures for eighteen centuries they are not likely to come to a term of their hostility or curiosity. The ceaseless endeavour to disprove, refute, shows that we cannot get rid of them. There must be something either in the history of their production or the quality of their contents, or the range of their influence, which separates them from all sacred books of the type of the Buddhist Tripitaka. Certainly we cannot conceive it possible that any of these so-called Bibles of other religions will ever among any civilised people supplant the Christian Bible. "One chapter of Isaiah," says Quinet,[1] "has more in it than a whole Republic of Plato." One Psalm of David will outweigh all the religious lore of the Vedas. One sentence of Moses, "The Lord our God is one Lord: I the Lord am holy," is worth all the speculations of the devout and learned authors of the Upanishads. Not that the Republic, the Vedas, the Upanishads are to be despised. On the contrary, the more they are

[1] *Le Génie des Religions.*

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studied the more likely is the Bible to be revered, for the truth that is in them is only prophetic of truth which could not then be revealed and received. We may outlive and outgrow the teaching of these wise ancients, but we have not yet transcended the originals of Christianity, and it is not at all likely that we ever shall. There is an end to the perfection of all other systems, but here is "a commandment exceeding broad," "whose line has gone through all the earth, and its word to the end of the world."

From this slight notice of the literature which Buddhism has produced let us proceed to glance at the literature which it inherited, with the view of catching a glimpse of the conditions out of which it arose. As with man's language, so is it with his other distinctive birthright: we can only understand a religion when we have ascertained its antecedents. Christianity emerged from a previous religion of which it professed to be the complement. Our Lord appeared among a people whose spiritual history extended over several thousand years. They had a sacred canon, professing to register the successive Divine revelations made to their ancestors, which was fixed as we have it now at least two, and perhaps more, centuries before He came. Instead of breaking with the past He acknowledged and appropriated it; instead of abrogating their

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law, He fulfilled it; instead of disowning their prophets He claimed them as His witnesses. In prosecuting His mission He brought upon Himself the fierce antagonism of the existing Church, whose leaders in less than three years succeeded in having Him crucified; but His constant appeal was to their ever-venerated Scriptures. His apostles again record and expound the incidents of His ministry and His death as realising the pre-intimations of their ancient rites, and as fulfilling all their prophecies; and all along faith in the Divine origin of Christianity is never supposed to be weakened but to be greatly confirmed by an appeal to the religion which it annulled and supplanted.

Now Buddhism grew out of Brahmanism, but however divergent their relations eventually became, it was originally accepted as a natural consequence of it. Unlike Christianity and Judaism, there was for long no trace of serious antagonism between the Brahmans and many generations of the successors of Buddha. Brahmans formed a considerable portion of his followers, and in regard to his teaching, his doctrines, where not identical, were not likely to offend them. St. Paul scandalised the Pharisees by preaching that outward Jewish connection marked by the seal of circumcision profited nothing, but long before Buddha's time Brahman teachers had declared, as he did, to that most

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exclusive of the Indian elect, that the true Brahman was not a person born within the sacred caste, but only the thoughtful and self-controlled man:[1] that a bad mind and wicked deeds are what defile a man, and that no outward observances can purify him.[2] Buddha has been designated as the best and wisest and greatest of Hindus; "a reformer of Hinduism who ignored its superstitions and follies, and sought to elevate and refine its dogmas."[3] It is now considered very questionable whether the difference between the two systems ever grew into hostility involving persecution of the new religion by the old. The two streams of Hindu belief seem for long in their course in India to have flowed peaceably side by side, and if Buddhism eventually disappeared from India as a separate and distinct system, it was not altogether because it was crushed by persecution, but because it returned to enrich and modify the religion from which it originally parted.[4]

Buddhism was thus an offspring of Brahmanism, but Brahmanism was itself the product of a religion older still. Behind Buddhism lies a great and

[1] Sutta Nipata, translated by Fausböll in vol. x. of *Sacred Books of the East*, Part ii. pp. 23, 76, 109, 113.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. x., *ibid.* Part ii. p. 40. We are also reminded that a man is not a Bikkhu because he puts on yellow robes, unless he has cleansed himself from evil (Dhammapada, i. 9, 10).

[3] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 5, 145.

[4] Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, pp. 162, 163.

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undefined past, a past with no history in the proper sense of the word, and absolutely without chronology; but out of this vast and nebulou sera there has been extracted a rich traditional literature, and Oriental scholars working on principles similar to those by whic hgeologic periods are determined,[1] are endeavouring by an examination of the various civilisations reflected in that literature to establish the leading stages in the growth of prehistoric Indian thought. The sacred books of India disclose sufficiently in outline the social and religious progress of the people from a period of great antiquity. No one can tell when the oldest fragments of them were originally composed, but some of them are said to have been in circulation among the Aryans when one immigrant contingent of them had arrived at the confluence of Jumna with the Ganges,[2] and if so, they image for us the life and beliefs of a people who must have been contemporaries with Moses some fifteen centuries at latest before the coming of Christ.

It is now asserted that this Aryan immigration had been preceded from the same quarter by an earlier one, in a past so very remote that the Indians had lost completely the memory of it, and that by the time this second wave had reached

[1] Émile Burnouf, *Science de Religions*, p. 24.

[2] M. Vivien de St. Martin, *Mémoires sur les contrées occidentales.*

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the north-west Gangetic tracts, the first had pushed its way as far east as the delta, where first vanquishing it finally amalgamated with the aboriginal tribes. It is supposed that from out of this earliest section arose the natural ancestors of Buddha, while in the second and intellectually superior section we must look for the religious teachers from whom his spiritual lineage is to be traced.[1] For with them were introduced the Vedas, revealing the earliest forms of civilisation and religion in that great section of the human family to which we ourselves belong. We see pictured in the Rig-Veda a people who, in complexion, manner, and rites, were at first as distinct from the native Indian races as were the Israelites from those of Canaan. Patriarchal in their institutions, pastoral or agricultural in their pursuits, they confront us as a primitive but certainly not a barbarous folk. Nurtured by the invigorating climate and magnificent scenery of an ancestral home "on the very roof of the world," they had reached a social condition in which, in a language fitly called "polished," or "carefully made" (Sanskrita), they were as fitly called "Aryan" or "noble." They practised the arts of Jabal and Jubal, venerated their sages and poets, and called their wives and daughters by

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 10.

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names of beauty and grace like that of Naamah. Their religion, though polytheistic, was not inspired by dread of evil spirits or awe of ancestral shades, but by wonder of the world around them and their own awakening instincts. Man in these ancient fragments, as in the first pages of our Bible, is evidently a creature transcending the savage, and made in a diviner image than the type from which it is maintained he must have sprung. Instead of consorting with or worshipping the animals, he exercises dominion over them; he questions himself and the heavens and the earth concerning their origin and author, and with some divine authentic instinct which he has never lost, he seems to be growing into the feeling that not only the trinity of supernatural powers which he worshipped, but his very self, are the children of some primordial and eternal Dyaus, the father of all.

While the earliest light that falls upon our ancestors reveals them as a religious people, whose worship, simple and rudimentary as it was, indicated a sense of inferiority, and also, as one who ought to know informs us, "some sense of flaw in the relationship, some concept of sin and guilt,"[1] to the deities worshipped, it is to be noted that gods and men were felt to be too

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i. p. xxii.

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much akin to allow of spiritual aspiration, or of high moral significance in man's religious acts. The ethical or rather spiritual elements so vital to the Biblical conceptions of religion may not be quite foreign to the earliest Veda, but they are scantily, if at all, represented in it. No prayer can be said to have ever been directed to obtain forgiveness, or growth in goodness, in the Bible sense. The sinner was for the most part only a defaulter in respect of offerings, and his guilt was that of a person who refused to render homage. That the gods might be able to watch over and enrich mankind, they had to be fed and sustained. The worshipper was thus in a certain degree necessary to the worshipped. The sense of submissive gratitude to the Deity which meets us in the earliest fragments of the Bible is not expressed, for religion was conceived of as a kind of exchange in which men purchased a right to divine help by service rendered, and "each man satisfied his higher instinct according to his own conception of the character of the being on whose favour his welfare was thought to depend."[1]

Centuries later, in another strata of sacred literature, composed in prose, dogmatic and liturgic

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii. p. 338; Weber, *Indian Literature*, p. 38; Sir Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 18.

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in character, and designated Brahmanas,[1] we behold the same branch of the Aryan family in a further stage of their history. Their patriarchal age has vanished, and their heroic seems passing into the aristocratic and hierarchic. Caste has appeared as the invariable attendant upon conquest, when the victor is separated from the vanquished by language, complexion, and religion. It is not so much caste, however, in the ordinary sense of the word, as class, sternly prohibiting marriage not only with the aboriginal tribes, but between persons of unequal rank, and anticipating the organisation of European society in the middle ages. In the nobles, who were subordinate only to the Church, the burghers or merchants socially distinct from and inferior to the nobles, and in the villeins or serfs of the conquered territories, we have an exact parallel to the old Indian system, in which Sudra, Vaisya, Kshatrya, all formed steps in a social pyramid, on the top of which the Brahman was throned.[2]

Thus early in the history of the Indian people emerged that sacerdotal institution which was to exercise so powerful and eventually so sinister an influence upon their religious progress. In Vedic

[1] See Satapatha-Brâhmana, translated by Professor Eggeling in vols. xii. and xxvi. of *Sacred Books of the East*. Max Müller places the age of these books within the ninth and seventh centuries B.C.

[2] E. Quinet, *Le Génie des Religions*, p. 185 ; Paris, 1857.

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times the father of the family and the rajah of the clan were the celebrants of the religious rites, but as life became more complicated ceremonies became more laborious, and men who had preserved the knowledge of the old hymns, and the religious formularies which had died out from the common people, gradually took the rajah's place. As thought widened, men refused to be satisfied with guardian deities that could be fed with rice and butter. The sense of human law reflected itself in the conception of divine rulers governing men, and penalties inflicted by man for wrong-doing suggested expiation for the infringed laws of deity. This idea of sacrifice, of which there is said to be no trace in the flesh feasts of earlier times, becomes prominent in the offerings of the period. "The shedding of blood, the burning of a limb of the victim in the fire, by some at least was believed to atone for transgression, and it is probable that at one time the religious instinct expressed itself in human sacrifice."[1] In any case, the development of the idea of the great efficacy of sacrifice as a means of compelling the gods to do the will of the worshipper—yea, of elevating the worshipper to their privileges and rank,—must soon have had the effect of making a priesthood, at first only helpful, to be

[1] Sir Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 24, referring to the Aitareya-Brahmana, vii. 13.

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necessary as the sole agents between man and deity. By preserving the memory of what had faded from the vulgar, by transmitting to their families a lore which became the more sacred the more it was forgotten, the professional liturgists or sacrificers, at first satirised by the poets as was the Romish friar by the minstrel in the middle ages, imperceptibly grew into an order whose privileges were more exclusive and whose pretensions were higher than were ever asserted in Israel by the descendants of Aaron. Among the Hebrews the priesthood was never allowed to gain complete ascendency. Its representatives were subordinated to the king, who was the fountain of all law, and they were kept in check by the prophets as the ministers of Divine revelation; but the Brahmans came to be regarded as not only the guardians of religion, but the teachers of all knowledge and the source of all authority. They owned no superior, were subject to no law in the state: each one was a pope in himself, more independent of the crown and the commonwealth than a Christian pope ever pretended to be, and had a faith in his personal infallibility which no Christian pope affected to have. In India there resulted from the ascendency all the evils that were manifested in Judaism and in Latin Christianity; and in India far worse results were produced. For, left to themselves as

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superior beings apart from the actual world, who never could err, they gave their minds that licence which too often in the history of thought has been confounded with liberty, and, as always happens when self-restraint is disregarded, the result in this instance was the production, not of a system of philosophy, but a crude conglomerate of incongruous phantasies more resembling a chaos than a cosmos.[1]

Let us not suppose that the Brahmans were originally, or even eventually, the vain and greedy and self-seeking bigots which the name unfortunately suggests to a European. They gained the ascendency because they cultivated the power to rise; they represent what many are inclined to revere as the ideal aristocracy, that of Intellect. They were not ignorant priests, but learned philosophers, from whom sprung again and again the reformers who headed the revolt from an overdone ritual, and from a faith which expressed itself wholly in metaphysical speculations. By them were excogitated the Upanishads and the laws of Manu, two of the most wonderful literary productions of mankind. From there too came the great epic poems of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, poems in some respects equal to the Homeric, and

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.* . 15; T. W. Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, p. 25.

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in cleverness of purpose, which is said to be that of arresting the progress of Buddhism, equalling anything which the Society of Jesus ever produced to counteract the Reformation. In its complexity and adaptability and many-sidedness Brahmanism is unrivalled by any human system, and the men who first gave it expression and directed its earliest movements must rank among the most original and daring of thinkers.

But they were Indians living in the period beginning about the tenth century B.C., in a land as completely cut off from the rest of the world as they were severed from the practical life of their countrymen. They had the same earnest and inquisitive mind which their westward-moving kinsmen had inherited with them from their trans-Himalayan ancestors, but in them it had to work out its advances in more adverse conditions. The tribes that went westward marched along the uplands, in zones of climate and through scenery and conditions stimulating effort, both mental and physical. Consequently they went on improving their beliefs, till they apprehended the truth which lies at the base of all true systems of faith, the immortality of the soul, and developed a philosophy which represents man's most successful attempt to grasp that divine unity after which man in his polytheism is ever feeling. It was otherwise with the branch that

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went southwards. They had to live under physical conditions not conducive to energy, under burning skies which repressed, and on soils which rendered industry unnecessary. As they gained ascendency over the aborigines the vices of the vanquished race told fatally upon them. Their sensual worship, customs like polygamy and sutteeism, ascetic practices and sorcerous rites, took possession of them; and, most marked of all, a belief very widely spread among the lower tribes of mankind so terribly bewitched them that to this day the Indian mind has never been able to break away from its fascination.

This belief in transmigration, with the pessimism which is its inevitable concomitant, was wholly absent from their ancient Vedic faith. At intervals from the times of Pythagoras it has infected the religion and philosophy of the Western Aryans, but never to any extent or with any serious result. Its true habitat and breeding-place, like that of the cholera, is among the degraded and broken-down populations of the East. It was communicated from the native Indian races to the Hindus, who unfortunately were prepared to receive it through the depressing and degenerating influences of tropical life on a northern-born family. Anyway, while their more fortunate brethren were eagerly groping after, in their westward progress, the truth of immortality,

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and thirsting for more life and fuller, they in their fat Gangetic plains, wearied of life as something not worth having, yet dreading death because it was appointed unto man not once but many times to die, were seeking some way of deliverance from this inherited curse. And the Brahmans professed to point to it. Their earliest popular conception of deliverance was simply that of re-birth in a happier world, perchance secured by sacrificial rites and religious acts, but such a conception could not long satisfy, and eventually it gave way in the higher class of minds to nobler views. In India, as elsewhere, men soon became conscious of the more solid security of merit procured by a life of justice and mercy. Man's future was in his own and not in the hands of a priest: its happiness or misery would be no accident, but the sure result of good or evil done here and now. Therefore the wise man endeavoured laboriously and continuously to collect merit by good deeds, "as the white ant builds her house, for with these as his guide he could hope to traverse a gloom hard to be crossed."

But by and by even this belief ceased to satisfy them, for how could man hope to liberate himself from the bondage of endless change as long as, seeking only a happier existence, he was content to be a citizen of the changeable? Let him seek reunion with Brahma, of which he is an emanation.

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So here again, while the Westerns were finding the path which would lead them from polytheism to theism, and were growing into nobler conceptions of what the individual self should be, the speculative ascetics of the East, in a life of meditation far apart, were trying to subside rather than rise into Brahma the Absolute as a river reunites with the ocean. In their earlier Brahmanas their fathers knew nothing of Brahma as deity, and at no time did Brahma mean to the Indian what deity meant to the Western Aryan. Polytheism in India never became theism in the old Greek sense, nor even Pantheism in our nineteenth-century sense. The mysterious all-pervading Presence was indeed early detected by the Indians as the "Breath" of all things, but the name employed by them to distinguish it signified only the universal self. In no sense was it the conscious author, but only the irrepressible source of things because reflected upon by illusion. Brahma Atman was neither the infinitely intelligent nor the perfectly blessed, in our sense of the word. It was simply thought without cognition, beatitude without consciousness. "The Hindu never thinks of asserting that Brahma knows or even has consciousness, but always that Brahma is knowledge." "It is simply impersonal being, absolute unity contrasted with disruption, from which existence, as an emanation wholly and only

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evil, because originating in a mistake, must move through endless cycles of change, until the way of escape be discovered and followed by which the erratic spark may be absorbed in the central fire." [1]

Such a speculation was manifestly an advance upon Vedic materialism, which sought to bring down the gods to the side of man as useful guardians, and upon early Brahmanism which sought by sacrifice to force them to do man's will, and by and by to elevate man to their level. In endeavouring, however, to abstract its disciples from the superstitions of the priests, it tampered with the foundations of religion. It never attempted to propitiate the gods—for, even if superior to man, they were as much involved in the labyrinth of transmigration as he was himself,—but it professed in a universe of illusion to have discovered the only real. It dared to name the Absolute; so, withdrawing from the world, it practised austerities for the sake of illumination, gave itself up to meditation to reduce the personal self to an abstraction, and endeavoured thus to escape from the necessity of existence in time and space into "passionless, characterless being."

All this is expounded in the Upanishads, the special scriptures of philosophical Brahmanism.[2] Though translated by Professor Max Müller, and

[1] Gough, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp. 41, 42.

[2] *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. i. and xv. No one has dated any of the Upanishads earlier than 600 B.C., and some of them are very late.

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lucidly interpreted by Professor Gough, readers of ordinary philosophical culture find them very hard to understand, and in spite of the high commendation of them by Rammohun Roy and Schopenhauer, they will be inclined to question whether these "beginnings of thought," "conceptions hardly formed," though essential to a proper knowledge of Indian philosophy, "should be ranked among the outstanding productions of the human mind."[1] Throughout their long and most tedious verbiage, however, one dominant idea is ever discoverable—that the chief end of the wise man is to know, not the forms of things, but the great self of all things, and seek his deliverance not by practice of religion but by pursuit of Gnosis.[2] Religion would indeed secure rewards, but they would only be transient; religion might regulate and modify the course of migration, but only Gnosis could break its adamantine chain. "The vision of Atman is the only deliverance, for by it all ties are loosened"; "the vision of the self is the light of the world, to which only the purest minds attain." To reach it not only the bonds of desire must be broken, but of ignorance too. "For Atman is highly exalted above all reverence and effort, above holiness and unholiness." "It, the uncreated, is beyond all good and evil," and

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i. p. lxvi.

[2] Svetâsvatara-Upanishad, iii. 7, iv. 14, 16, v. 13, vi. 7, 9, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xv.

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upon rewards and punishments, upon both good and evil, the sage must turn his back, for he alone who knows the Universal is free, from Karman and from Kâma (action and desire) which hold captive the self in the net of the impermanent.[1]

This is said to be the last outcome of Brahmanic belief, and "indeed the highest point reached by Indian philosophy."[2] Manifestly, it can never be designated a gospel. It was a deliverance impossible for the many, and possible only for the few; a promise not to the suffering millions, but to the mystic and the sage, and to them it came not with the hope of a nobler character to be attained, and of a purer, higher life to be reached, but only with that of a dreamless repose—"the sleep eternal in an eternal night"—when the soul ceases to be soul, merged "like the weariest river" in a shoreless and waveless sea. And this was the system in which the wisest and saintliest in Buddha's days were nurtured. He was no Brahman by caste, but as pure Kshatrya he would be instructed in his youth by Brahmans, and in early manhood he for long consorted with them. He had mental capacity, and spiritual energy, more than adequate to the task of comprehending as fully as they did their very abstruse theosophies. From

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, pp. 47, 48; Gough, *Phil. Upan.* pp. 61, 67.
[2] T. W. Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, p. 28.

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their speculation he derived much of his terminology, like Karma and Nirvana, and even Buddha, words which, till recently, it was considered he had to coin. Many doctrines which were once regarded as peculiarly his own were taught in their jungle schools by learned Brahmans centuries before he was born. Without the Brahmans he could not have been produced, and yet his system will be found to be original and distinct. They furnished the phraseology in which he expressed himself, the methods by which he wrought, the institutions like that of the wandering Bikkhu, by which his system was spread; but in essentials we will find that his teaching was not only different from but antagonistic to theirs, and that, had the principles which he enunciated been truly accepted and consistently carried out, this noblest of the Reformers of Hinduism would have reformed it out of existence.

During this pre-Buddhistic era, much longer, perhaps, than is generally supposed, another process of development was going on among one section of the Semitic stock, in a small handbreadth of a land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. The several stages of that development have also been unconsciously recorded in a literature so peculiar in its motive, and method, and character, as to separate it from the national literatures of all the world. It is not that it claims to be inspired, for the same

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claim is advanced by the Indian, and indeed by or for every collection of religious writings extant; but while in the literature of India we see represented the struggles of man to reach the Deity, that of Palestine professes to represent the endeavour of Deity to reach and to communicate with men. Intensely patriotic as a people, the sacred literature of the Hebrews is essentially religious. Their historians are not permitted to record, and the poets are not allowed to sing their own national achievements, but only the mighty works and the praises of Jehovah their God. The shame of their many defeats, and of their final destruction, is ascribed always to their own sin, but any national success or prosperity is due to the Divine favour. Alike through all their victories and disasters, an Almighty Hand is acknowledged to be shaping their destiny, and to be working out a purpose which, often entirely hidden, and at best only very imperfectly understood by them, is seen toward the close of their sad and eventful history, to comprehend the larger destinies of mankind in a salvation of God which "all the ends of the earth" were to see.

The relative antiquity of the Hebrew and Indian scriptures is not a matter which we are called upon to discuss. It is possible that some hymns in the Rig-Veda may be older than anything which we possess in the Bible, but it is almost absolutely

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certain that most of the books of the Hebrew Bible were in circulation as scriptures, and that the whole of it was in the shape in which we have it now, before any ancient Indian sacred book was reduced to writing. The Pentateuch, in the form in which we have it now, is probably not the most ancient of the Hebrew writings. It appears to be a very composite production, containing works of different authors, written originally at different places and at different times. The most destructive criticism, however, admits that it embodies very ancient traditions—many of them not peculiar to the Hebrews, —which were open to a succession of very talented narrators. These traditions may indicate their derivation from a once common ancestral home, or acquirement by later contact with foreign nations, but they are in nowise incorporations; for in the Hebrew books they are not only presented in forms far more refined, but they are employed to suggest or to unfold a spiritual teaching quite beyond the capacity of the peoples among whom it is alleged they originated. No one denies that we have in the Pentateuch writings as old as the time of Moses, and probably fragments of writings much older still. Ewald[1] ascribes an important portion of it to the times of the later judges, another still more important section to a priest of Solomon's

[1] *History of Israel*, vol. i. pp. 41, 47.

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reign, and the Book of Deuteronomy to the time of Hezekiah. Even if we are compelled to accept later dates than these, it follows that they are older than any Upanishad, or even any of the Brahmanas. There was a Law, a Book of the Covenant, a Book of Origins, in currency probably before the authors of any of the Brahmanas was born; and even if we are to regard the contents of these works as only traditional, we may surely assume that the Hebrew traditions are as credible as the Indian. It is quite true "that religion exists long before it is expressed in a canon, and that law runs and rules long before it is written in a code,"[1] but in regard to accuracy neither suffers from being so definitely registered. Hitherto the maxim affecting such matters has been, and for a long time henceforth we may be certain it will be, not *litera locuta*, but *litera scripta manet*.

Again, we are not called upon to maintain in this lecture the chronological exactness or the historical faithfulness of the sacred annals of Israel; all that is asserted is that in them we have as faithful a mirror of the ages which they profess to reflect as we have in the Indian. The characters in the scenes which they produce are neither puppets nor shadows, but very living and substantial realities. The personages at least are men whose idiosyn-

[1] Gifford Lectures, *Natural Religion*, p. 563.

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crasies are sharply but naturally defined, and whose speech, and manners, and conduct, and beliefs, accord wonderfully well with the places and the periods in which they meet us. We have to examine the Hebrew annals however, not to verify the details of ancient transactions which they record, but simply to ascertain the beliefs which they contain and illustrate. The truth or the error of these beliefs we need not discuss, for the beliefs themselves are facts of great importance, and so are the consequences that flowed from them; and when we compare these beliefs with those which we have been considering, we will find a development parallel indeed, but of an entirely different class of ideas or religious thoughts.

In the Rig-Veda we have reflected the immigration of a higher race into what has been called the Holy Land of India. The Rig-Veda dates from about the times of the Exodus or the invasion of the Holy Land of Palestine. The Hebrew traditions, like the Indian, tell of an earlier immigration of their fathers into the same Palestine some five centuries previous. When we examine the narratives in which this earlier immigration is recorded, we find the patriarchs moving along among similar conditions, but representing a much higher level of religious thought than the Aryans when they reached the Ganges. Though everywhere

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living among nature-worshippers, and though showing the taint of that worship in their own conduct, their religion is neither that of physiolatry nor idolatry.[1] Abraham was not a polytheist; he came out of Ur of the Chaldees—whether that be a designation of a geographical region or a description of a religious state—not as one who trembled before the forces of Nature, afraid to inquire what they meant or whence they came; not as one who had discovered behind them the Infinite Self, out of which, because of ignorance or illusion, he and they had emanated, but as a man who believed in a Personal Deity who had created and continued to control them, and who, though El-Elion and Shaddai, yet watched over and communicated with Abraham as his best of friends. We need not ascribe to the patriarch an intelligence which he did not possess. God may have been in his thought too much the almighty Protector of himself and of his descendants—for in that age the family of the chief would be all-important, and the idea even of the nation had not yet germinated,—

[1] It is significant that in the beginning of the Bible Nature-worship seems stamped as accursed in its symbol, the serpent, and that the whole Bible from beginning to end is a Divine protest against that worship in all its forms. Mankind in all ages is tempted to become as the gods, and in a low condition he has almost everywhere succumbed to the temptation. He feasts his gods, compels them to serve him, is really higher than they, and thus he degrades himself or falls from the ideal of one made in the image and after the likeness of God.

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but that he apprehended God under a strictly moral aspect is vouched for by his life, as the founder of a new epoch to which his latest descendant looked back with thankfulness.[1] We may not be able to prove that Abraham's conception of Deity was monotheistic in our conception of the word. It lacked the sublimity of Isaiah's conception and the definiteness of that of Moses. There was naturally a great deal of darkness clinging about it, but his ideas of duty and religion and worship were far higher than entered the thoughts of a Vedic or Brahmanic sage. The rite of Bloqd Covenant, universal in the Semitic tribes, he felt divinely impelled to offer Godward; and the same impulse is said to have led him to offer in proof of his allegiance to his unseen and almighty Friend the sacrifice of his only son. But there was unmistakably imparted by Abraham to the ancient rite of circumcision a far higher and more spiritual idea, and it is noteworthy that while the spiritual part of his awful sacrifice was accepted, the slaying of the son was rejected, with the effect of stamping, in the very morning of Hebrew history, the Divine abhorrence upon that form of propitiation to which the unrestrained instinct of man has everywhere been prone. His worship, his sacrifice, his whole service, instead of being regarded as a means of making Deity service-

[1] Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. i. pp. 320-322.

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able to man, or of raising man to the comfortable condition of Deity, meant the surrender of the heart and of the whole life to His will, not as only mightier, but juster and more merciful than he was himself, and therefore perfectly worthy of trust and love. And so it is plain that whether the patriarchs represent a race fallen because of sin, from purer knowledge and more intimate communion with God, or one providentially educated from the very lowest animalism, they indicate a religious stage to which the greatest things became possible. They are stammering at least the glorious Name, comprised in three letters, whose significance millennial ages of study can never exhaust. They believe in God, who, behind and beyond Nature, and greater than it, is revealing Himself as one infinitely worthy of their allegiance and adoration, and their faith becomes righteousness.

When we reach the Mosaic period we find that though clouds and darkness are round the throne of the Eternal, the light that streams from it into the minds of men reveals, just more clearly, the same one living and true God. According to the Book of Origins, a period of four hundred and eighty years separated the patriarchal from the Mosaic age, and during that period the Hebrew tribes had first been sheltered, and then for long enslaved, by the most civilised of all peoples in the ancient

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world. Astonished by the grandeur of Egypt, they at last succumbed to its religion; and while oppression in the pent-up Egyptian cities deteriorated fearfully their physical condition, slavery and idolatry wrought with terrible effect upon their character. They came out of Egypt a cowardly horde, leprous in body, childish and brutish in their disposition. Their children however entered Palestine, more than a generation after, a powerful and consolidated and victorious force, whose fear was upon all the surrounding tribes; and their annals ascribe all this to revival and reformation due to Divine revelation and training under the plastic genius of one of Egypt's wisest men, and one of the greatest prophets of the human race.

The oldest Hebrew historian states that Moses wrote two tables of the Covenant, and one entire, though small, Book of Laws besides; and though it were proved to universal satisfaction that he never wrote anything else than the Ten Words, and the preface[1]: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one," it will be admitted that no one in all the old world has ever contributed more than he did to man's stock of the highest of all knowledge. The truth communicated by the patriarchs in the word Creator was of supreme moment and promise for the human race, for by it man was

[1] Some ascribe it to the Deuteronomist, ch. vi. 4.

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saved from the sin and folly of confounding the Deity with His works. The idea of a Creator occurs indeed in the Vedas,[1] but not as an idea that ever got hold of the popular mind, or ever ripened into the conception of Creator which we have in the Bible. The Brahman expounders of Vedic thought made deity the sum of all that is, a being that is ever becoming, a universe that is never completed. The Hebrew, on the contrary, conceived of the universe as God's work—not God. It was but a part of His ways, and as nothing before Him. In the Indian creed emanation continues indefinitely, and their sacred books record a never-ending genesis. In the Hebrew Bible two pages suffice to relate the genesis of the world and man. Between the deities of the Vedas and the Jehovah of Moses there is no natural progression, and we never in any series, however prolonged, can reach from the one to the other. The Indian deities are simply one with Nature, and like its

[1] Professor Müller finds the first traces of a Maker or Creator in the Vedic deity Tvashtar, the carpenter—the clever workman, even smith, forging bolts for Indra therein, Rig-Ved. iii. 55. 19. "Tvashtar, the enlivener, endowed with many forms, has nourished the creatures and produced them in many ways; all these worlds are his." Of another god, latterly called Pragâpati, he quotes Rig-Ved. x. 81. 2, as one who, "creating the earth, disclosed the sky by his power." Very significantly, however, he reminds us that the same poet loses the idea, and speaks of the secret of creation as undiscoverable.—Müller's *Natural Religion*, p. 245. Also Introd. to Upanishads, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xv. p. xxiv.

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forces they are multitudinous, capricious, evanescent; but the Deity of Moses is One, Supreme, Invisible, not to be likened to anything we can see or hear—eternal as One who alone is, and causes to be: "I Am that I Am!" The effect of such a belief was to raise all men who learned of Moses above the worship and tyranny of Nature, before which so many of the tribes of mankind have prostrated themselves. It made them regard the animal creation especially as existing not for their adoration but for their use; and Nature itself and all its forces as powers to be studied, subdued, and governed. The germs of man's faith in his own imperishableness, implanted from the first, began to sprout the moment he found himself capable of knowing and serving this Eternal and Invisible One as the Author and Controller of his being.

Comparisons are often instituted between the Mosaic ethical code and that of other religions, with the view of showing that there is nothing peculiar in it, and that instead of being fuller it appears to be even defective when placed side by side with some of them. The peculiarity of the Mosaic code is in its first table, which nearly all the others lack. The Mosaic is an interpretation of the law written in men's hearts by the light of religion: it is the manifestation of religious truth as the real foundation of ethics. Morality has so

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long been associated with religion in our thought that we speak at times as if it had been always so; but among no ancient people, save among the Hebrews, did any worshipper expect morality from their deities. On the contrary, they conceived of them as having all their own appetites and passions and vices, so that as civilisation advanced men were often far nobler and purer than the gods which they worshipped. When we remember that physiolatry, from its lowest to its highest form, tolerates and even consecrates the vilest impurities by its worship, we can realise what a new and creative power was communicated when the conviction had laid hold of man that Deity is one who is Himself all that man ought to be, one who can only be propitiated by righteousness and appeased by truth. Human progress became not only possible then, but it was secured. So pure an idea of God meant a loftier idea of man. It involved the poorest and the humblest of men in vast responsibilities, and therefore it implied for them rights and dignities equal to those of the highest of men; for the supreme all-holy Lord God was no respecter of persons, and the beggar on the dunghill was in His eyes as precious as the prince upon the throne.[1]

From the period when Vedic speculation first began its course to that in which it produced its

[1] Fairbairn, *Religion in History and in the Life of To-day*, pp. 39-51.

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earliest Upanishad, these moral and spiritual truths were not kept secret among the philosophic few, but were prophesied in the gates and streets of every Hebrew city. No one can say that they were thankfully received and loyally obeyed by the people of Israel; on the contrary, their whole history represents the struggle of a stubborn and rebellious race against a revelation too pure and spiritual to be acceptable to them. Their religion was always higher than themselves, but while towering above them, it perpetually hovered round them, contradicting their most cherished inclinations, and condemning their most deeply rooted habits. The invisible God, of whom no likeness was to be tolerated, who was not to be worshipped even in the greatest of His works, was too far removed from their sympathies. It took centuries of severe handling to uproot their strong tendency to Nature-worship; yea, the Divine detestation of it had to be branded in the national conscience by their final overthrow. Eventually, however, the truth got rooted in the mind of a "remnant" of them that God is not to be worshipped under any symbol, and cannot be enshrined in temples made with hands; that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him; that in gifts and offerings He takes no pleasure, but that He dwells with the meek and lowly, and finds a pleasing sacrifice in

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the contrite spirit and broken heart. The divinity of the revelation seems attested by the fact that it continued all throughout their history above them, rebuking and condemning, but never suffering them altogether to fall away from it. And this is still its relation to ourselves: it is a creed contradicting our life, a Divine law in direct opposition to all that claims to be popular; for where even yet is the Christian who can be said fully to realise all that is summed up in the truth, "God is not to be worshipped by man as though He needed anything;" "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"?

The universality as well as the purity and spirituality of this fundamental article of the Hebrew faith separates it from and elevates it above the Indian beliefs. Nature-worship has always been local and ethnic in its range; the gods of the hills are not the gods of the valleys, and the deities of Assyria command no reverence in Egypt. To the Hebrew was first communicated the catholic faith that the one Lord over all is rich in mercy unto all. The treasure was received, it is true, in an earthen vessel, by a people who could only apprehend as children what we are expected to hold in the comprehensions of men.[1]

[1] It was only by their very highest and greatest souls that the God-

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In patriarchal times by the people generally the One Lord was conceived of too much as just the protector of the family. In Mosaic times the great and terrible God who avenged Himself on Egypt was thought of too much as the champion of the tribes. Under David and the kings He was too much the sovereign of the nation and of the Holy Land; and so it was down to the times of the Captivity. All throughout this period, however, there were perpetual protests against this attempt to ethnicise a faith essentially catholic. They were reminded that the Holy One was Lord over all the earth; that though they were a peculiar people, they were not His only people. The prophets of other nations were brought to testify to them; their own prophets were sent to warn the heathen that they should not die. All through their history they were admonished that their gift was too large for their little nation to contain; that it was theirs only in proportion as it was imparted or shared, and that as a nation they could only exist if all nations were blessed in them.

Alas however for them, all this seemed in vain

head was conceived in anything of its spiritual glory. To Abraham God was the Creator, distinct from and greater than the earth and heavens which He had made; to Moses He was a righteous Lawgiver, training upon eagle-wings a peculiar people; to David He was a tender and wise Shepherd of a foolish and helpless flock; to Isaiah and the later prophets a Father dealing with rebellious people, whom He pities, knowing whereof they were made. These conceptions, however, cannot be said to have been those of the mass of the people.

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in its effect upon the nation at large; the treasure was forgotten in their estimate of the vessel; their own destiny loomed largest in their conceptions of Providence. It was not the holy Lord God who was to have universal dominion, but they His favourites, and therefore their king would reign over all lands and keep his feet on the neck of their foes. Out of this fatal error, and out of the childish superstition akin to it, that material prosperity was the sole or chief reward of devotion, came all their unbelief and apostasy, and so when the succession of prophets had in vain testified to them that the Lord alone was to be exalted—that before Him, not before them, must all peoples bow,—the threatenings long uttered were fulfilled: the nation was shattered, its palladium, the temple, was destroyed, and they were driven beyond the Euphrates.

Then however ensued a course of events which must be regarded as among the greatest surprises of history; for just when they and their religion might have been expected to vanish as completely as the ten tribes previously deported had vanished, they are found to be preserved; and the worship of Jehovah, instead of being extinguished by the dominant worship of Babylon, is seen to emerge in the course of two generations more vigorous and considerably purer than ever it had been before. It was during the Exile that the real nature of the religion

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of Israel, as one adapted and destined to enlighten and sanctify far more than a single people, began to be truly discerned.[1] The Jewish people had a great deal to learn from Babylon and Persia, and they returned to their own land with clearer conceptions of immortality, the resurrection, the spiritual world and judgment to come, than any of their forefathers had gained. Scholars, however, who enlarge upon their indebtedness to their conquerors, seem to forget how much they had to communicate to them. In the psalms of the pre-Exilian period, and in the doctrines of Moses and the prophets, they carried with them a treasure richer than the whole wisdom of the East. So though they learned much from Babylon, they also learned in it to appreciate the gifts which they had previously despised. Sorrow and penitence helped to clear their spiritual vision, and prepared them for the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah. They learned that though banished from the Holy Land they were not thereby cast out—as their fathers imagined—from the presence of Jehovah; that, though the temple had been destroyed and sacrifice had been suspended, God could still be worshipped with sincerity and truth. The teachings of their prophets brought home with conviction to them

[1] Kuenen, *National Religions and Universal Religion*, Hibbert Lectures, 1882, p. 187.

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the oracles of their earlier seers, that obedience was better than sacrifice, and contrition than sin-offering,—"that he that doeth repentance, it is imputed to him as if he went to Jerusalem, built a temple and altar, and wrought all the sacrifices of the law."[1]

With the destruction of the temple there arose the synagogue, which, with its reading of the Law and the Prophets, its chanting of the Psalms, its offering of prayer, and the giving heed to the voices of the elders, represented a far higher and more spiritual service than temple courts reeking with sacrifices and steaming with incense. It is true that they were still fascinated by the material splendours of the former days; for after their return they restored Jerusalem, rebuilt the temple, and re-appointed its services. A revival led to a reformation, which, following the old lines as closely as possible, assumed the form of a retrogression rather than advance. The new energies of the nation were repressed by a Levitical domination as rigid and intolerant as Brahmanism ever was in India. It was not the spirit of the Living God but the hand of the long dead Moses that was to rule their conscience and mould their history. The consequence was just what might have been anticipated. Human nature revolted from subjugation to a system which had served

[1] Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i. p. 275.

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its day. Religion, where it was earnest, stiffened into formalism, and formalism in many cases congealed into hypocrisy, and, as inevitably happens, intellect raised its protest against this irreligious religion in many anti-religious and even atheistic forms. Meanwhile synagogues rose all over the land, promoting doctrine rather than ritual, stimulating rather than repressing discussion, and thus conserving and propagating the truths that prepared the ways of the Lord. Only a handful however, had returned; the majority of the exiles prospered and multiplied, and, unlike the ten tribes, were not absorbed among the Gentiles. At the beginning of the Christian era, for one Jew living in Palestine there would be a hundred living beyond it, not only in Babylonia, but in Greece, and Egypt, and Italy, and all over the Empire. There were many Jews in Spain, in Britain, and in the dark territories beyond the Danube; and though they adapted themselves to foreign ways, and became all things to all men, in regard to their religion and their intimate connection with Jerusalem they still continued to be Jews.[1] As their nationality declined their faith arose. By and by, not content with the heathen toleration for their religion as only one of the many in the world, they began to spread it abroad.

[1] Jos. *Contra Ap.* ii. 30. 32; *Antiq.* xviii. 1. 1; *Jewish Wars*, ii. 8.

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Judaism, with the temple and the Levitical law, would in Palestine eventually have petrified, but the Diaspora, with the Synagogue and the Septuagint, enabled Israel to play their proper parts as the religious teachers of mankind. Proselytism gradually became very vigorous and successful; devout men and women everywhere, unable to find peace of conscience in the intoxicating and demoralising rites of Pagan temples, turned from them to take hold of the skirts of the man who was a Jew. In a manner and to an extent which even the youthful Isaiah never could have dreamed, Jerusalem began to attract out of every nation under heaven the kind of people who were found in its streets at Pentecost,—Parthians and Medes, and dwellers in Pontus and Arabia, and the eunuch of far distant Ethiopia.[1]

As we have noticed the highest outcome of Vedic thought in pursuit of Atman, let us also notice the highest development of Hebrew belief in their hope of Messiah, whose germs are traceable in their faith from the first. For example, one of the earliest and most lasting effects of their conception of Deity was the conviction of their own unworthiness and inability to live in the presence of the holy God. Though they were to

[1] Uhlhorn, *Conflict of Christianity*, chaps. i. ii.; Jos. *Antiq.* xiii. 9. 1, and 11. 3, and *Contra Ap.* ii. 10. 39; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, iii. 273 *seq.*; Renan, *Les Apôtres*, pp. 253, 260.

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be a kingdom of priests for other nations, they dared not enter into the relationship which priest implied. They required a mediator like Moses, who could speak to the Holy One for them, and receive for them His message. Their whole worship was based on this feeling, and the purer and higher rose their conceptions of God, the more intense became their self-abasement. Between Him and the noblest of His creatures there was an impassable gulf. Though He was far, far off from them, He was far too near—so near that they could not go anywhither from His presence, and yet in their dread there was a yearning to come near to Him and to see Him face to face. The Brahman aspired to lose himself in the Absolute, in the pure light of characterless knowledge; the Hebrew, mastered by the personality of God, longed to see Him as He is. And never more earnest was this longing in the Hebrew to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to be satisfied with His likeness, than in the times of his deepest self-humiliation and keenest contrition. "I pray Thee, pardon the *iniquity* of Thy people;" "I beseech Thee, show us Thy *glory*;" "and these two pangs so counter and so keen," shame and reverence akin to dread, aspiring love, were to prove not only the purification of their own faith, but the birth-throe of a better hope for the world.

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For their dread and shame sprang from their consciousness of their own evil, and their aspiration from an instinct which whispered that evil, though deeply ingrained in, was not essential to the being of man. Their sense of sin was very poignant, more so than in the case of any other people. The Hindus had a conception of merit, but a very poor and weak conception of sin. They were more impressed by life's suffering than by the taint of which it was only the consequence. But the Hebrews felt the shame and the curse of that taint as no people ever felt it. They had quite a vocabulary to express the many shades and degrees of the feeling of it; yet in their speculations they were led to believe that this taint was not inherent in their nature nor ineradicable from it. There was a time when sin was not; there might be a time when it would not be. The dominion of evil was an interlude, and though terribly prolonged in human experience, it might have an end. That was the central ideal of the Fall which they pictured on the first page of their Bible, and conserved in their seventh-day Sabbath.[1] In the fact of man's creation they

[1] The truth on which the Sabbath is founded is the majestic truth of a completed creation, and one conform to the latest discoveries of science. During the whole course of human observation no new creative effort has been displayed in the production of a new type. The animal and vegetable worlds stand to-day as man first beheld them. The creative spirit has passed into the soul of man, in whose world is the progress which nature has long ceased to manifest, and under whose

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felt that his redemption was involved, and so the Hebrew dread of and longing for God were reconciled by a hope that though to man belongeth shame, to God belongeth mercy as the God of salvation. There was another and a better covenant than that which had been concluded with their ancestors at Sinai, or with the first father of their tribes long before. It was made not with Moses or Abraham for Israel, but for all nations with a Divine Mediator, who, behind all that was of man, though yet the seed of the woman, would, in a way that neither Moses nor any of the prophets could understand, eventually make an end of sin.

The history and the literature of the Hebrews would be a perplexing enigma without this hope. Like their faith, it was too pure and spiritual for them to receive, and to the very latest it always appears with something of the defilement of their religious condition clinging to it. During the Exile, however, this hope became purer and stronger, and the imagery in which they embodied it became more evangelical and spiritual than that employed by earlier poets and prophets. The section of the Hebrews that returned to Palestine held it in increased strength, but with the old national taint upon it. Their own restoration and

handling nature itself improves. But God, though resting from His works of creation, is not in Scripture said to be resting from His works of mercy: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

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the favour of Persia kindled anew the foolish dreams of their ancestors, and, alas! when Persia disappointed them, and its favour was supplanted by oppression, and the kingdom, instead of rising Phœnix-like out of its ashes, became the battlefield or the gage of foreign nations, there broke out in Palestine the bitterest plague of unbelief and apostasy that had ever assailed the nation. For idolatry, for overlaying or corrupting the worship of Jehovah, their forefathers had often been severely chastised, but no prophet had as yet complained of a temple deserted and an altar defiled by unworthy offerings. And this was because men professed to have discovered in the destruction of their national hopes that after all religion was vain, and there was no profit in serving God.

Any one who has intelligently read Malachi, or the sayings of Agur the proverb-collector,[1] or the Book of Ecclesiastes, will see to what a depth of scepticism, if not indeed of atheism, their perverted Messianic hopes had brought the Jews of Palestine. We appreciate the criticism which regards Coheleth, so alien to the healthy and joyous spirit of the Hebrew religion, as the natural outgrowth of this period.[2] When faith in Israel's imperishable kingdom

[1] "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh," Proverbs xxxi. 1.

[2] Hüber, *Der Pessimismus*, 1876, p. 8; Holdheim, Preface to vol. iii. of *Predigten*, quoted by Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, pp. 250-253.

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seemed to be completely wrecked, when ministers of religion led the revolt from it, and unrighteous rulers and corrupt society made life in Palestine, as in Rome in Nero's day, not worth the living, it is not to be wondered that this one which has survived, but that "many books"[1] should have been written to echo the cry, "All is vanity." We may listen to it as a note of despair from a pessimist in whose people religion had died, because disappointed political ambition had shown them that "no earthly good" came of serving God; or we may read it as the protest of some healthy-minded Jew against that orthodox asceticism which after the Captivity invaded religion, and led to the rise of Pharisaism and Essenism. In any case, it seems to mark the proper close in Palestine of an age of national perverted faith and hope. The Essenes like the Indian ascetics had hope neither for the nation's recovery nor for the establishment anywhere of a kingdom of God. The Pharisees, on the contrary, had hope, but it was the old political hope, and in them, though Egyptian and Syrian and Greek and Roman had trodden the nation under foot, and though the Maccabees had suffered and poured out their blood in vain, it seemed to grow stronger and stronger. Ready to believe any impostor, and to rise at the faintest call, their fanaticism more than

[1] Eccles. xii. 12.

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once betrayed the people into ineffectual and most sanguinary revolts; but it had one result that was not wholly evil, for they drew after them the multitudes to the desert, when the thunder of the Baptist's cry reached Jerusalem, "The kingdom of God is at hand."[1]

So was it in Palestine; but among the Diaspora all over the Empire the hope of Messiah assumed a purer and more catholic form. Everywhere it was strong, but the broader horizons by which they were surrounded saved them from the delusions which intoxicated the Palestinian Jew. In classical literature there are tokens that it had filtered into Gentile minds. It was undoubtedly vague and shadowy even at its brightest, but in the Sibyl and Pollio its fulfilment signified something more important than a successful revolution in Palestine. It meant mighty changes impending that would bring good to all the world, the augury of a star that would soon glimmer in the eastern horizon, and grow and brighten till it would be seen to be not a light for Asia only, but the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His beams for every nation under heaven.

We have thus been following two lines of

[1] Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i. p. 276; Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. pp. 316-325; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. iii. p. 177.

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religious movement, perfectly independent of each other, far apart geographically, still further apart in the beliefs which inspired them. We have seen how the melody of joy and health which the Indians brought with them from our common primeval home ended in a sigh of despair. Individual existence, at first so full of wonder and delight, lost soon its freshness and glory, and came to be felt to be such a burden that emancipation from it by absorption into the Absolute was hailed as a boon. The human mind, leaving its childhood behind it, and advancing to question itself and the universe, after a season of movement and sense of freedom and power, somehow lost or missed the way. Oppressed in the toils of the jungle, and wandering ever further from practical life as it proceeded, it lay down vanquished, longing only to be at rest and in quiet as infants that never saw the light.

The other line of development marks not the course of a speculation, but the growth of a faith laying hold of mankind with creative and transforming power. This faith, never dissociated from, but seeking to dominate and reform actual life, condemned inertion, and fostered hope for a race working out its salvation, because convinced that God is working in them both to will and to do. We see a light streaming from above into the darkness of man, paining and blinding at first the

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organs which it seeks to purify. We see a struggle on the part of the creatures to bring the Most High down to their level, and make Him their servant, and a striving of the Divine Spirit to train them as children. We see a mighty Hand laid ever on a peculiar people, at times so softly that they hardly felt it, at times with conscious guiding and sustaining power; at times chastising them sorely by the sword of the enemy and the heart-hunger of exile, but never giving them over unto death. Not for forty years, but for twice forty generations we see Him leading and humbling and proving them, till in the souls of the aptest—though only "a remnant" of them—He had rooted ideals of human destiny which never can perish. Then, that all might be ready in the fulness of time, He scattered them among the nations, and lo! when required they are everywhere, crying in the crowded capitals of the East and of the West, in the darkness of the North and the brightness of the South, "Prepare ye in the desert an highway for the Lord."

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LECTURE III.

THE BUDDHA OF THE PITAKAS: THE CHRIST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE condition of Palestine and the progress of events in it at the beginning of the Christian era, are set in the clear light of history, and defined by an accurate chronology. To the superficial observer it appeared to be a prosperous land, for it was fertile and carefully tilled, populous, and, in the northern regions especially, teeming with the fruits of industry. It had reached the commercial stage of civilisation, and everywhere, in well-built cities adorned with palatial buildings, many of them the abodes of merchants who rivalled the Italian nobles and Herodian princes in the costliness of their manner of living, it yielded indications of the luxury which successful commerce brings in its train. But as always happens when wealth abounds in a land, there was a corresponding amount of poverty. While the rich were lavishing fortunes upon selfish and gigantic follies, an in-

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creasing multitude, born and bred in squalor, were struggling for very existence. In the days of the Son of Man their numbers were vastly increased by political troubles which disturbed trade and depressed agriculture. So to an eye that looked beneath the surface this seemingly prosperous Palestine was diseased and in a dangerous condition, for pauperism and discontent were rapidly maturing the seeds of anarchy, and preparing for the successive revolutions in which so many perished before the Roman eagles swept down upon the carcass of a State politically dead, because morally and socially corrupt.

Under the Herodian dominion, secured as it had been by the destruction of an illustrious royal house and the sacrifice of their bravest patriots, the sympathies of the people revolted from the throne to cluster for a time around the temple; but just as the dignity of the office of the high priest was rising in their estimation, successive nominations to it by the king and procurator of men odious to the good turned the tide in a different direction. The hierarchy was represented by the Sadducees, a party small in number and far from popular. Though wearing names of ancient and honoured families, they were obviously careless alike of the sanctuary and of the interests of the nation. Strict observers of the law of their Davidic ancestor, they

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rejected the prevalent interpretations of it, and all the new-fangled doctrines concerning angels and spirits, and the resurrection of the just, which had been formulated since the Exile. Especially opposed to the belief that the keeping of the law would procure for a man recompence in a future state, they held that the law must be kept to the letter just because it was God's will, even though the soul died with the body. Their wealth and position as the aristocracy brought them into connection with the representatives of the great foreign powers of the times, whose manners and fashions they copied; but the nearer they drew to the Roman and Asmonean nobility the further they drew apart from the people whom they never pretended to love, and who, equally alienated, regarded them with similar dislike.

Withdrawn from the temple, the affections of people were freely given to the synagogue leaders as the representatives and fosterers of the national ideals and hopes. In these days every small town had its synagogue, while in Jerusalem alone there were said to be four hundred and eighty. These were not only places of worship, but schools in which the Law was made the common possession of all without distinction, and also arenas for exciting discussion, in which was nursed that love of dialectics to which so many striking analogies exist both in India and Greece.

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They were dominated by the Scribes, the sole copiers for the ever increasing synagogues of the ancient Scriptures, and the true interpreters of the law. Pedantic and self-important though they generally were, they were revered so by the people for their piety and gifts that from them were chiefly selected the members of the court of the Sanhedrim, which represented all that was left to the nation of executive power. Their Cabbala, revealing the secret doctrines to be found in names, of which we have specimens in the writings of St. Paul,[1] and the mystic significance of numbers, of which we have traces in the Apocalypse, may be only interesting now as curiosities, but we must never forget that they rendered undying service to the world in preserving from corruption, by many arts carefully studied and applied, the texts of Holy Scripture.[2]

The Pharisees, the Nazarites of the nation as their name implies, the democratic antagonists of the aristocratic Sadducees, the staunch opponents of the Gentile, the believers in the coming kingdom of the just, were deservedly the most popular of all the religious sects in Palestine. More liberal than the Sadducees in their interpretation of the law in its

[1] *E.g.* Sinai = Hagar (Gal. iv. 24-31); also Claudius = ὁ κατέχων (2 Thess. ii. 6, 7); Hausrath, *Life and Times of Jesus*, vol. i. p. 77.

[2] Derenbourg, *Hist. de la Palestine d'après les Talmuds*, pp. 159, 202.

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bearing upon the people, they never thought of exacting for faults or transgressions the ancient penalties; but they were far more severe in their personal observance of it.[1] To the mass of them it was a ladder by which they might climb into the kingdom of heaven; and out of it, to make sure of this end, they evolved a most comprehensive system of bye-laws, as sacred to them as the original precepts by which every action and word and relation of life was regulated. Pharisaism was just Brahmanism, and though more ethically applied it was in its spirit and aim as selfish. Bent only upon accumulating merit, in character it became eventually as morally impure. Forgetting in their attention to petty details the weightier obligations of life, disregarding their neighbours that they might provide for their own recompence, the Pharisees became as a class so corrupt as to draw upon them the most scathing of all the denunciations of our Lord.

More Pharisaic than the Pharisees, said to be an offshoot or secession from them, the Essenes in their desert communities sought by the worship of Jehovah in the spirit of the prophets, and yet apparently by prayers to the sun, and by an ascetic and celibate life, to deliver the immortal soul from material impurity, to educate it to enjoy the beatific vision, and to prophesy the secret things

[1] Wellhausen, *The Pharisees and Sadducees*, pp. 8, 26-43; Greifswald, 1874.

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of the future. In these communities of pious people, the very flower of Judaism,[1] the only ray of light in the deepening darkness, some may be pardoned in professing to find the dawn of Christianity—not in its external arrangements, but its inward dispositions and beliefs. In its avowal that morality was superior to legal observance, in its endeavour to prepare the mind by calm to receive the Divine instruction, in its sabbatic sanctification of all days of the week, in its estimate of all work as religious, and of every meal as sacramental, it pre-intimated the teaching of the coming gospel; but while its arrangements may have suggested the monastic institutions of Christendom, we can never regard it as the matrix of Christianity. Its life was just the last flickering ray of Judaism, a bright gleam irradiating the features of a moribund age, but not that of a new birth with promise of a mighty future. It was not the rush of a new force into the battle of the redemption of humanity, but the *sauve qui peut* of a rout which it believed to be universal. As pessimist as Brahmanism in its views of life, though more Buddhist than Brahman in its methods, its aim was the same—that of rescuing the individual from a world nigh unto perdition and really not worth the saving.[2]

In the virtuous Pharisee and the pious Essene

[1] Jos. *Antiq.* xiii. 5. 9, xv. 10. 4, 5; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 8. 2, 14.

[2] Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. p. 392.

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Judaism found its best representatives;[1] but at most there were only six thousand Pharisees[2] and four thousand Essenes[3] in all the nation, and, alas! the majority of the Pharisees were not sincere; and the Essenes, though really in earnest, had abandoned the nation to its fate. Among the religious classes piety and morality had become so dissociated that a man who in the matter of belief or of worship would strain at a gnat, might in practice without condemnation swallow a camel. The result of this fatal divorce between creed and conduct was seen in a social corruption which augured everywhere the gathering of the storm-clouds of retribution. At that time Greece was dead, and what was best in its spirit had passed into Alexandria. There, blending with the more robust spirit of the Hebrew religion, it was forming that Hellenism which, though it never could account for the origin, was yet powerfully to influence the unfolding of our religion. In Hellenism we have the natural resultant of the conflux of Eastern and Western thought, which, according to some, will explain the birth of Christianity. In it certainly the Aryan and the Semite were seen contributing their very best thoughts, and the product

[1] Delitzsch, *Jesus and Hillel*, pp. 31 *seq.*; Pirké Abôth, Cambridge, 1877, *passim*.

[2] Jos. *Antiq.* xvii. 4.

[3] Philo, *Quod omnis Probus Liber*, p. 12.

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was—Philo; but Philo-Judæus is neither St. Paul nor St. John, and the Christ of the Gospels is further beyond him than the heavens are above the earth.

In Alexandria Greece might be said to live, but Rome was hopelessly dying. Drunk with the cup of the sorceries of all nations, embruted with every lust, it was staggering to a doom which neither law, even the best conceived and most thoroughly administered, nor philosophy, even the wisest and most consistently illustrated, could avert. The civilisation of the Western world was marvellous: it was a world not only of poets and artists, of brave soldiers and subtle statesmen, but of sound moralists too; but civilisation, powerless to save, could only cover with broidered robes the leprous body, or adorn with golden trappings its bier, and morality could not restore what was sick unto death. When Rome and Palestine were alike corrupt, there was no hope for the world in man; yet when all help in man faileth, there never lacketh help in God, and so, just when the night was blackest, and despair had seized on all save a few aged people in the courts of Zion, and a few thoughtful Magi in the distant East, lo! over a Babe in the cattle-crib of a leewan in Bethlehem was descried the shining of the Star of Hope.

When we turn from Palestine to the holy land of Magadha, the cradle of Buddhism in the sixth

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century B.C., we find no light of history streaming upon it. All is dim and shadowy, with no chronology to define events, and no incidents to distinguish personalities. It is like a land of dreams to our modern conception, but it is not a chaos. We can trace to a certain extent movements in it, and as we follow them there emerges in outline sufficiently clear a real civilisation, which, though lacking the stir and endeavour, the commerce and the art of the West, and really inferior to it, is yet most interesting in its pathetic resemblances, and all the more instructive that its beliefs and institutions were formed out of antecedents and predispositions very different from any of which the Western world had experience.

It is evident from the very cursory survey already made that religious belief in India and in the West must have passed through phases significantly similar. In both it proceeded from faith in a revealed system of truth—in India in the inspired Vedas, in Palestine in the inspired oracles. Human speculation in both cases was begotten, and for long it was educated in faith in revelation, then beginning to rationalise; in both cases it unintentionally undermined what at first it only endeavoured to explain. Turning from ancient scrolls to the study of the book of human nature, whose pages, though often tattered and defiled,

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are always fascinating, it was staggered by the contradiction between man's ideals of goodness and justice and the realities of human history. Out of this collision arose the Promethean demand that the divine powers that govern life "should either explain or abdicate." In Palestine this wrestle with the inequalities of providence originated early, and continued all along; but it was confined within limits by faith in the personality of Deity as one so infinitely greater than man that only a part of His ways could be understood. Indian speculation never reached the approaches to this idea of God: it wandered into a Pantheism of a grosser type than ever the West was acquainted with, and once it reached that stage it could not stop. Just as in Greece pantheism ripened into the materialism of the Epicurean and the atheism of the Stoic, so in India, even before the days of Gotama, may have begun that open revolt against Deity, in the perilous attempt of reason to explain by itself the universe, with which his name has since then been most closely associated.

The religious world in India in the times preceding his birth, like the religious world of Palestine, had a hierarchy represented by the Brahmans, the indispensable functionaries in all sacrificial services. Corresponding to the Scribes were the Teviggi, the reciters and expounders of the sacred

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and still unwritten books. The Rabbin had their analogies in reforming Brahmans, who alone or in communities that had gathered round them professed to teach the higher discipline which could secure deliverance. If a multitude of sects be an indication of intellectual movement, there was as much stir in Brahmanism as in Judaism. In the Pali books there are mentioned as contemporaries of Buddha six noted teachers of great schools, the most formidable of whom, or at least the most hated of his soul, was the head of an ascetic sect which, like the Essenes, had renounced the world to make good their own salvation. This Niggantha sect, still represented in India by close upon half a million of adherents in the district of Rajputana, claims not only to have preceded the founder of Buddhism by two hundred and fifty years, but to have anticipated the essentials of his system.[1] Its philosophical and ethical doctrines are almost in accord with his, while its cosmogony and ritual incline more towards those of Hinduism. Its adherents apply to their founder the titles "Victor" or Jina, and "Enlightened One" or Buddha, which many imagine were ascribed solely to Gotama; but whether Buddhism sprang from it or gave birth to Jainism is a question still undecided.

[1] Bühler, *Ind. Ant.* vol. vii. p. 143; Jacobi, "Mahâvira and his Predecessors," *Ind. Ant.* vol. viii. pp. 311-314; Kern, *History of Buddhism in India*, vol. i. p. 143; Colebrooke's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 380.

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The only solid fact as yet ascertained is that from the earliest traceable period their mutual relations are marked by that pronounced intolerance[1] which prevails when kinsfolk quarrel.

Collision and antagonism between sects in India was neither so sharp nor so fierce as in Palestine, and Buddha ministered in conditions much more favourable to the propagation of his system than did Jesus Christ. The Sadducean opponents of Christ represented a powerful hierarchy, the Pharisees a popular democracy, and the Scribes an influential Sanhedrim, with power of inflicting a sentence of death. The Essenes never mingle in the scenes of the Gospel, and it is questionable if they are ever referred to in them. Over all and dominating all was a most jealous and vigilant Roman despotism, ever ready to turn even a religious quarrel to its own account, so that it was the most natural of things that an opposition thus represented should nip, as it were, Christianity in the very bud by crucifying its Founder. In Magadha, however, it was otherwise. The broad distinction was between Brahmans and Sramans,[2] the latter a general title

[1] See "Jainism," by Dr. Shoolbred—Report of the Missionary Conference, 1888, vol. i. p. 41 ; Wilson's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 427 *seq.*

[2] "Sramana," in Brahman speech, was a man who performed hard penances, from *sram*, to work hard. There is another Sanscrit root, *sam*, to quiet, and from it afterwards the popular etymology derived the word. See Professor Max Müller's translation of the Dhammapada in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. p. 65 *note*.

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covering many secessions from Brahmanism, and the popular favour was equally bestowed on both. The Brahmans, though dominant, had not the power, and to their credit do not seem to have had the will, to persecute. It was not from them, but from the scholastic and conceited Teviggi and from the ascetic sects that Buddha encountered most formidable opposition; and yet even in these cases opposition was not rigid. It was a war not of blows, but of words, in which an appeal to the secular arm or to force was out of the question. A new sect, therefore, especially one that had donned the yellow robes and alms-bowl of the mendicant, protesting against the debasing belief in the efficacy of Brahmanic rites, or the virtue gained by extravagant Yogi austerities, would obtain from the people at large more favour than resistance or disdain.

The intellectual movement in India appears thus to have been extensive and many-sided. In the multitude of sects there is a guarantee for freedom,[1] and competition in the proclamation of truth is better than monopoly; but in religion, as in trade, the competition of over-multiplying sects tends to increase adulteration. So in early Buddhist literature, while there is incontestable evidence of

[1] There seems to have been four great divisions of Sramanas, with as many as sixty-three philosophical systems represented by them. The Brahmanas were also similarly divided. See Sutta Nipâta, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. Part ii. pp. 15, 16, 88, 93.

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the existence of honest instructors, there is also unquestionable evidence of the abundance of quacks, who trifled with truth simply to make a gain of it, and of shallow but clever professionals, who dealt with gravest themes in the spirit of the mere debater.[1] So there, as in Palestine in the days of Coheleth, through over-discussion the old faith was rapidly evaporating. In the Brahmans, religion had degenerated into formalism; in the Teviggi, into traditionalism. In the philosophic Sramans it was in many instances passing into blank atheism; and among the ascetics, into despair. While this was the condition of the learned and of the few, the masses everywhere, like the Ammé Ha-árets in Palestine, were wandering—no man caring for them—further and further into the idolatries and sensualities of Hinduism. Morality was perishing, the writing on the heart was getting more indistinct, and conscience becoming more confused. Then, just as five centuries later, when faith was almost gone, Christ came to restore it by communicating new life, so when divine law was in danger of fading from the consciousness of men, there arose one to assert its eternal supremacy; preaching the creed of Coheleth without his fear of God, and enforcing the keeping of the commandments, not as expressed in Vedas or interpreted in Brahmanas, but

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 71.

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as written in every fibre of the body and every faculty of the being, as the only way to safety.

Who was he? Like the Author of Christianity, he has had to contend, as it were, for the recognition of his personal existence. Even to-day it is maintained that neither Christ nor Buddha ever existed, that they were merely incarnations of popular conceptions, and that all the legends concerning them can be reduced to a combination of anterior mythological elements. These mythical theories, however, in regard to the origin of Christianity, may be considered among the curiosities of criticism;[1] and in regard to the origin of Buddhism, though more justified by the confessed uncertainty as to dates, they have been satisfactorily dispelled as another instance of refining overdone.[2] Brahmanism and the successive phases of Hinduism can be traced to no individual founder, but in investigating the origin of Buddhism we breathe a very different atmosphere. There is a human and moral character about it which the other Indian religions lack: something real as in Mosaism, and palpable as in Islam.[3] We may rest assured that Buddhism had for its founder a real person, and though our best

[1] See *Year-Book of Protestant Theology* for 1883 for an account of the views of Professor Loman of Amsterdam.

[2] M. Senart, *Legend of Buddha*, Paris, 1875; Kern, *History of Buddhism in India*; Schoebel, *Buddh. Actes de la Soc. Philol.*; Paris, 1874, vol. iv. pp. 160 *seq.*

[3] Annual Report of the Asiatic Society; Paris, July 1875.

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authorities have had to search for their facts through a vast amount of fabulous materials, we may accept the dates which they have approximately fixed for his birth and death, and the outlines which they have sketched of his life and ministry.

Gotama, a name still found among the Rajput chiefs of Nagara, was born in the north-eastern region of India, about a hundred miles from Benares, about the year B.C. 557. His father, a Sakya, a name unknown in any native Indian family, and said to indicate descent from a race of northern nomad immigrants, was rajah of Kapila, and his mother was a daughter of the family of Koli.[1] His principalities, of very limited extent, seem to have been eventually swallowed up by the greater Indian monarchies, for when Fa-Hian visited the country Kapila had become a vast solitude, and there for ages its very name has perished from the living speech of men. Even though his royal pedigree be an embellishment of the later legends, there seems no reason to doubt that his father was noble and rich according to the standard of the time, and sufficiently independent of Brahman domination to train his son in his own way. It seems not to have been in their studies, but in the exercises befitting a warrior prince, that Gotama was

[1] Cunningham, *Ancient Geog. of India*, vol. i. p. 147; Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 95; Beal, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 67.

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educated, though a disposition thoughtful and melancholy, and strongly sympathetic, appears to have disinclined him from such a mode of life. Even as a youth the darker sides of existence threw a shadow over him; the sufferings of mankind were among his earliest impressions, and he brooded over them till his mind, poisoned by the contemplation of them, threw its gloom over everything around him, and made the very air hang heavy with the weight of woe.

To one driven as he was to the conclusion that existence was a burden rather than a blessing, death, according to the belief in which he had been nurtured, could afford no relief; but hope seemed to dawn for him as he thought of the happy yellow-robed sages who, freed from his horror, were tranquil and dignified, abstracted alike from pleasure and pain. So after a period of irresolution and struggle, in the very prime of his manhood, he stole away from his wife and his newborn child, and cast in his lot with the forest recluses. Having lived some time with them, and having found that their ascetic discipline failed to satisfy his aspirations, he left them, and joined two philosophic Brahmans, who taught him the science of meditation in its lower and higher degrees. Though he had profited so much by their instruction and discipline that he rose in six years

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from being a disciple to a teacher, he confessed that he had not found by their methods the imperishable and permanent quietude which he coveted. So, abandoning all his disciples, he withdrew into solitude, and plunged into fasting so rigorous that he nearly destroyed himself; then, finding that the secret of deliverance was not thus to be obtained, he returned, amid the contempt of his former companions, to a more genial mode of life. Then, all alone in the jungle, its manifold discomforts, the memories of home, and the fruitlessness of all his endeavours, assailed him with the force of a temptation to desist from the quest; but rallying all his powers for one supreme effort, he eventually, under a banyan-tree at Bohimanda, triumphed—awoke as one before whom all illusion had vanished, and who by no divine illumination, but by his own personal energy, had attained to knowledge of the causes of all things, and had at last become the Buddha, the Enlightened One.

We need have no difficulty in accepting this outline of the man's spiritual history as substantially correct; and assuming it to be so, we see at once that it is contrasted in every point with the early history of Jesus of Nazareth. In the Indian narrative, *e.g.*, we have long and prolix details of the youth and manhood of Gotama; in the Christian Gospels very few incidents, one pregnant

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saying, two or three words of description, sum up the whole record of Christ's biography till He appeared before the Baptist. This silence is surely suggestive, for it could not have been the result of ignorance or forgetfulness. "It is silence, where, to a moral certainty," as is indicated alike by the apocryphal Gospels and the Buddhist legends, "men left to themselves would have used much speech." In the Gospels the things which we are naturally curious to know are concealed from us, and there is disclosed only the spiritual reality in which Christianity consists. Where He was, how He looked, what He did during these long years of waiting and preparation, the Evangelists have not told us; but they have revealed enough to show what He was. Scenery and circumstances are as nothing, because the life that was revealing itself in them was everything; and of the unfolding of that life, the few and slight but most suggestive touches of the Gospels enable us to form clearer conceptions than we are ever likely to form of Gotama's from the abundant incidents of the Buddhist story.

Thus while the son of the Indian rajah did not require to keep from himself anything that his heart desired, Jesus of Nazareth in the home of Galilee had to deny Himself, and to endure in the commonest kind of labour a hardness which the Indian youth, in the inertion of his class and race,

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regarded as part of the curse of existence. Still, Jesus had meat to eat which the other knew not of; He had bread enough and to spare, while the other was perishing of hunger. Rich in poverty, while Gotama was poor in his abundance, Jesus the carpenter appears highly exalted in what the other would have called humiliation. There, while Gotama, having everything which he could desire at his call, had discovered that human life was worse than vanity, Jesus, self-surrendered in faithful service of others, was learning how full of blessedness and how rich in power of blessing the life of any man might be. The angels of nature and providence, by the lilies of the field and the children in the market-place, instructed him in a wisdom which no Indian sage ever dreamed of; and though He saw the wretchedness of this evil world as Gotama never saw it, and felt for the misery of men as Gotama never could feel, He saw what even Buddha the Enlightened never could descry, the face of a Father in Heaven not frowning in wrath but yearning in pity over all. So, instead of repelling, the suffering and evil of the world drew Jesus closer to it, till, finding His grace, not as Gotama found His wisdom, in desire to be delivered from it, but in the depth of His longing to save it, He gave Himself to it and for it, as for a joy that was set before Him.

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Again, the enlightenment of Gotama was the result of a painful struggle, first between inclination and duty, and then with great perplexities of duty, but in Christ it was painless and natural, like the growing of the dawn into the day. His pure and at first joyous life unfolded itself like a beautiful morning under the animating impulse of love to God and to all His creatures. As He grew in consciousness of the heaven within, He became more conscious of the disorder without, and more sensible of His isolation in regard to it. As year by year the sense not of the world's misery but of its guilt increased within Him, there would also increase the longing that it should be taken away. Very early the conviction took possession of Him, that He was not here to win His own way to deliverance, but to be about His Father's business. Gradually the Father's business was revealed to Him, and when the preaching of the Baptist had made it clear, without any wrestle like Gotama's, Christ, ever close to His Father, and ever clear in His duty, set Himself at once to fulfil it.

It is often alleged that the temptation in the wilderness, which marked the close of our Lord's long period of silent preparation, is an exact parallel to the fasting and temptation which preceded Gotama's enlightenment at Bohimanda. There is doubtless an external similarity sufficient

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to arrest our attention, but the internal contrasts disclose experiences of quite different characters. In the light of their respective histories, these occurrences, though often referred to as miraculous, were in reality most natural. They represent experiences of which there could be no witnesses, and which, indescribable in plain words, could only be suggested by a kind of parable. The temptations are recorded not as they were presented to the persons tried, but in the character which they assumed when their drift was discovered and their aim was detected. Both were assailed by suggestions, raising in them a tumult of emotion, which, if unresisted or yielded to, would in Gotama's case have been equivalent to abandonment of his quest for deliverance for the sake of sensual indulgence offered by Mâra and his daughters, and in the case of Christ, to refusal to live by obedience, to tempting the Holy One of Israel, and to worshipping the splendid majesty of wrong. The temptations were real, assailing the will, seeking to paralyse or to change it; and their force in each case would be in proportion to the depth and purity of the natures assailed. Gotama, though unmistakably a man of high spiritual aspiration, was attacked by sensual visions,[1] which could not possibly have

[1] "Mâra est le démon de l'amour, du péché et de la mort," says Burnouf in his *Introduction to the Study of Indian Buddism*, p. 76;

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been a temptation to a nature like Christ's. He had "to repel as evil what to other men would have appeared as ideals of good, and had to turn away from what the noblest of men would have cherished as innocent dreams or splendid chances,"[1] because to His pure eyes they were Satanic temptations. He suffered, being tempted, but His trouble and suffering were caused neither by irresolution, nor vanity, nor fear, but by His own lowly humility and to the sense of the exceeding greatness of His mission.

Gotama, sorely concerned about himself, went apart to fast and meditate and wrestle for his own deliverance, but Christ went apart not to fast—fasting was an unheeded incident in and not the aim of His retirement, and in no perplexity about His own salvation, for that was assured and made the basis of assault,—but that in quiet meditation He might see more clearly the way by which the salvation of God could be brought to mankind. Christ was forced to acknowledge that absolute surrender to His Father's will in His mission meant absolute antagonism to the world, and He was tried by suggestions as to the mode of prosecuting His mission,

see also Sutta Nipâta, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Part ii. p. 159, for the popular conception of Buddha's temptation; the arrows of Mâra are "flower-pointed," like Kama's, the Hindu god of love. See Dhammapada, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Part i. p. 17.

[1] Geikie, *Life of Christ*, vol. i. p. 449.

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all the more seductive that they were confessed to be natural. Might He not, as the Beloved of Heaven, to carry the world along with Him, and to save multitudes from suffering, swerve just a little from His high ideal, and accommodate His ways to suit their prejudices? These temptations in the beginning continued His temptations to the very close of His ministry. Not once, but all His life, as He hungered for the sympathy and trust of those whom He sought to save, was He tempted, as in Capernaum, when many fell away from Him, to "change the stones into bread." Not once only did He stand on "the battlements of the temple," nor once only was He offered "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." Again and again was He in peril when He stood high in the opinion of the crowds, and heard them in their Hosanna entreating Him, through His very sympathy with and love for them, to gratify their wishes; yet in every case the temptation was rejected without the slightest wavering the moment it was understood. "Get thee behind me, Satan." "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

For again, Christ conquered because from the beginning to the closing agony He stood firm rooted in obedience and in submission to the will of a Higher than self; but the Buddhist writers want to

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impress the very opposite of this upon us in regard to Gotama's victory. He is said to have conquered Mâra by the force of his own will, and won his way to light by his individual energy alone. After he became Buddha he hesitated whether he would preach the way of deliverance to men, not because, like Moses and the Hebrew prophets, he had no confidence in himself and required the assurance of a divine strength not his own. He had perfect assurance in himself, but he had no confidence at first in the ability of others to comprehend and to follow him in a way so difficult to find and so hard to tread.[1] He asked no deity to help him, for he was greater and wiser than all the gods. In the legends Brahma is said in intercession to have pressed him to preach the way, and moved eventually by no intercession, but simply by his own pity for men lost in the vortices of miserable existence, he went forth in no strength but his own to preach and to teach in a ministry, not of shame and humiliation and death, but one of great exaltation and honour.

This conception colours the narrative of his whole career. In the later scriptures he is designated the Tathâgata (He who has gone or arrived at Nirvana), the very reverse and point-blank contradiction of Christ the Messiah, He who was sent.

[1] Mahavagga, i. 5. 2; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xvii.

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There was no higher to send him, no wiser to teach. He came in his own name; but Jesus, as one sent by Him into the world, went forth in the name of His Father. Though He made demands upon the faith of the world compared with which the pretensions of Gotama are trivial—for at the highest he only claimed to be Buddha the Enlightened, while Christ spake of Himself as the "Light of the world,"—yet in Christ's claim there was ever a sense of dependence expressed or implied, as of one who of His own self could do nothing, and who only taught what His Father had showed Him. Both spake with authority, and not as the scribes; both superseded the traditional domination of what was said by men of old times with the emphatic "I say unto you"; but there is a vast difference in the quality of this authority in the two cases. The authority of Buddha sprang from his acknowledged intellectual superiority, but the authority of Jesus sprang from spiritual insight. The deliverances of Buddha were given after the manner of a Socratic dialogue, and he won his converts and vanquished opponents by his dialectic skill.[1] But in all the

[1] This is not the place to discuss the substance of their respective teachings. Their aims seemed to be similar, for both proclaimed freedom to be gained by the Truth, or saving knowledge, but their conceptions of the knowledge that saves are as widely contrasted as are their ideas of salvation. If we put the Sermon on the Mount side by side with Buddha's first sermon (translated in vol. xi. p. 146 of *Sacred Books of the East*) we find contradiction in almost every sentence. "Blessed are the poor

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encounters of Christ with His enemies there was no forcing of their reason to gain His end. His replies and counter questions were brief and direct and incisive; they were like the fiat of a king or the sentence of an unchallengeable judge, from which reason and conscience alike confessed that there could be no appeal.

Certainly in the two ministries was fulfilled a saying of Christ, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive," for after a very short period of imperfect success the public career of Gotama became a continuous victorious progress. Disciples, drawn mostly from the highest classes—the Brahmans, the nobles, and the wealthy merchants—flocked round him wherever he appeared. He journeyed followed by admiring crowds, he had only to show himself to impress, and he had only to preach to convince. The most stubborn resistance became fluid under his spell, and those who ap-

in spirit" is an utterance not only foreign to but in direct antithesis to the preaching of Buddha. He has no sympathy with the "poor in spirit," if we take the phrase in the light of the old Hebrew concept of it. His benediction is reserved for the self-conscious and self-reliant, who are bent upon self-culture and self-development. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, etc., and thy neighbour as thyself." Buddha found no higher to adore, and no other than self to consider. The mora precepts in his law are based on no appeal to conscience, and are inspired by no sense of duty. Others were regarded as the occasion for winning merit, and kindness done to them was not done for their sake, but with the view of securing the safety of the doer.

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proached to confute were sure to succumb to his sweet reasonableness. He was supported by powerful rajahs, and those who did not show him proper reverence were punished according to their edicts. He was lodged in parks and gardens and palaces, several of which were gifted to him for the use of his Order. Accessible always to people of all castes, and of every condition, and of both sexes, he received the attention of the courtesan, and shared her feast and accepted her offering,[1] but he always maintained the nobility and purity of an irreproachable character, and wherever he was found it was as the prophet of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Rejoicing through his long and honourable ministry, sometimes loath to die, as foreseeing the troubles which would befall his Order after his decease, he at last, when over fourscore years, in a sickness alleged to have been induced by partaking too freely of some rich food, with the quiet dignity and composure of a saint, fell asleep, and was buried with the funeral obsequies which

[1] Dr. Oldenberg (*Buddha, etc.*, p. 148) very properly remarks that Ambapali the courtesan was no Mary Magdalene, and that she was not regarded by Buddha as the woman that was a sinner was regarded by Christ. Buddha had not Christ's horror of sin, and therefore felt none of His boundless pity for the frailty of its victims; of hatred of sin in the Christian sense Buddhism knows nothing. Its highest virtue is imperturbability, a serenity that is apathetic in regard to the most outrageous wrong or the most heinous wickedness. Cariya Pitaka, iii. 15; also *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Part ii. p. 151.

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Indians then bestowed on the bodies of their greatest kings.[1]

It would be impossible, in every respect, to find a more absolute contrast to all this than the story of Jesus of Nazareth. If He was popular, it was only for a little, and then only with the masses. The aristocracy and the religious classes stood aloof, and soon entered into a conspiracy to get rid of Him. He had a few disciples among them, like Joseph of Arimathæa, and Nicodemus, and the family at Bethany, but the words of the prophet accurately sum up the narratives of the Gospel, that He was "despised and rejected of men." To follow Him meant joining in no triumphal procession, but in a struggle against storm and tide which was sure to end in death. Suspected from the first, and speedily denounced, He was watched and tracked and driven from place to place, till at last the toils of the hunters closed successfully around Him, and at the age of thirty-three He was crucified as a malefactor between two robbers on Calvary.

But the grand and crowning distinction between the import and effect of the two ministries emerged at the close. After Gotama died and his body was burned, and his relics had been reverently gathered,

[1] Bishop Bigandet, *Life of Gaudama*, p. 287; Professor H. Wilson, *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 243; Wheeler, *History of India*, vol. iii. p. 139; Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 148; Mahâparanibhâna Sutta, in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. pp. 71, 72.

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and distributed, and enshrined in costly dagobas erected in the various scenes of his labours, there was an end of him. He had gone out into the void, according to his own theory of the hereafter, and, no longer capable of being of use to his disciples, he exhorted them to be "their own refuge, their own law, and to work diligently out their salvation."[1] But when Jesus had been crucified there was manifestly not an end, but rather a new beginning of His personal influence, a rising in fuller power, a coming again with greater authority. From the very morning of His ministry He took His death into His plan, as the consummation of one stage of His mission, without which His plan would have been a failure. All His teaching centred in His death, as a moral and spiritual necessity in Divine providence. Instead of complaining of it, He pointed to it as the seal of His Messiahship, "the cause for which He was born, the end for which He came into the world," "the hour" of His glorification. The very setting of crime and passion which His enemies sought to give to the manner of it only made it in His estimation more divine.

[1] Mahâparanibhâna Sutta, vi. 10, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. p. 114. Dr. Edkins, in *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 57, gives a version of an appearance of Buddha after cremation to his mother, Máya, who came down from heaven to see his coffin. Professor Childers finds no trace in any Pali earliest literature of any belief in Buddha's existence after death (*Dictionary of Pali Language*, p. 472, note 1).

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Instead of evading it He went straight to meet it, when the time had come, as one who had a purpose to fulfil by it. That purpose He announced to be the development of His personal resources, the liberation of the creative energies of His being. As uncrucified He might be weak, as crucified He would be so mighty as to "draw all men unto Him." The event amply fulfilled the prediction, for shortly after the crucifixion Christ again confronted the world in another form and in far greater power. The followers of Buddha went forth testifying to his law, and they prefaced their preaching by the invariable formula, "Thus have I heard, when the Blessed One lived in ——." Their mission was simply to recall and declare and expound the system of a master who had been absolutely lost to them, but the apostles of Christ from the very first testified not of a doctrine, but of Christ Himself, as one who having died still lived, was reigning in mightier power, and would be with them always, even to the end of the æon.

For we must bear in mind that Buddha and Christ stand in very contrasted relations to the systems of belief which they each founded. Soon after Buddha's death, if not before it, the formula of admission into his order began with the phrase, "I take refuge in Buddha," which consequently

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has been described by some as the "first article in the Buddhist creed." We must not for a moment however suppose that this expression is of equal or even of similar significance to our confession, "I believe in Christ." Gotama in the whole course of his preaching never asked his hearers for faith in himself as essential to their emancipation. All that he demanded was obedience to the law, disposition to enter, and determination to follow the paths which he had discovered. He could not give them Nirvana, nor even bring them to it; he could only tell them the way to it, which he had found, and as he had succeeded so might they by their own individual energy.[1] We are thus not free to explain Buddhism from and by the person of its founder; it is perfectly explicable apart from him, as if he had never lived; but apart from Christ, and without the light thrown upon it by His person, Christianity would be an enigma. Christ from the first demanded faith in Himself as essential to salvation.[2] Belief in what He taught was always

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, pp. 322, 323; Kuenen, Hibbert Lectures, p. 264.

[2] In the Bhagavadgitá loving devotion for Krishna is demanded as the only means of salvation; but Krishna-worship began very considerably later than the origin of Christianity. Professor Müller admits (Gifford Lectures, p. 99) that Christian influences were possible then, but says that there is no necessity for admitting them. He cites the passage from Bhagavad. ix. 29 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. viii. p. 34), "They who worship me with devotion or love, they are in me, and I in

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subordinated to trust in Himself. Consequently the apostles never said, 'Observe the precepts; follow the paths, and you will find the way of escape,' but always "Believe in (*or* on) the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." They pointed to Him as the sole object of faith and worship, as the only rule and example and inspiration. Their creed, their theology, their ethical code, were not elaborated in systems; they were all comprehended in a Person who required neither apologists nor defenders, but only witnesses who would manifest and declare Him.

This must be borne in mind when we consider the miraculous elements which are common to the presentation, given in both religions, of their respective Authors. The story of Buddha, as we have hitherto followed it, tells of a great renunciation, but of one that can hardly be called unparalleled in the history of religion. He was probably neither the first nor the last noble Indian youth who "for the sake of that supreme goal of the higher life went out from all and every household gain and comfort, to become a houseless wanderer."[1] But the story as we have it in the Buddhist books is very different.[2] Had any one asked a yellow-

them," as an interesting parallel to John vi. 7 and xvii. 23, but we must remember that St. John's words were circulating all over the world for generations before these were penned.

[1] Mahavagga, v. 1. 18.

[2] The Lalita Vistara, of which there are many versions, is the chief

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robed missionary, about the time when the last Gospel was being written, what he meant by the Buddha, he would have begun by telling of one who, thousands of ages back, in the shining world of the gods, out of pity for the miseries of men, resolved to become a Buddha that he might teach them the way of deliverance, and who through many transformations—in which he was baptized into all experiences, even those of rat and a clod of earth—at last reached the point when, coming down from heaven, and entering, in the form of a white elephant, the side of the wedded wife[1] of a great king,[2] was born as Buddha. He would tell of a mysterious baptism, when two full streams of perfumed water fell from heaven upon him, while all the gods in all the worlds raised in responsive harmony the heavenly song; of a holy sage who descended from heaven to greet him with predictions of his glorious career;[3] of many prodigies displayed by him in his

authority for the legends. In the *Buddhist Birth-Stories*, translated by T. W. Rhys Davids, in Bigandet's *Life of Gaudama*, and Spence Hardy's Manual (*Legends of the Buddhists*), in the *Romantic Legend* of Sakya Buddha, translated by Professor S. Beal, will be found a large and interesting miscellany of the prodigies connected with the coming of Buddha.

[1] A wife, not a virgin; *Romantic Legend*, pp. 32, 36, 37, 41.

[2] Lalita Vistara, p. 63, Calcutta edition; *Buddhist Birth-Stories*, pp. 62, 68.

[3] Nalaka Sutta, Sutta Nipâta, xi. 1. 20, 21; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Asita, the aged ascetic, is said to have ascended to heaven after his daily repast, and upon finding the gods in joyful commotion he at length returned to see the new-born wonder (*Birth-Stories*, p. 69).

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illustrious youth; of his mighty struggle with and victory over Mâra, Lord of all Desires, and of his going forth as a great king, at the urgent request of the great god Brahma, to preach Nirvana and deliver the world.

Then he would tell how when he set "a-rolling the wheel" of the "kingdom of righteousness,"[1] he did so with such effect that not only multitudes of men, but eighty thousand gods and angels, "hearing, each in their own tongue, though the language was that of Magadha,"[2] were by one sermon imbued with saving knowledge and converted; how during his long and holy ministry, by discourses and parables and miracles, he brought countless millions of men and women, and gods and sprites and fairies, to find the right way; how the great devas came to worship or to ask counsel from him;[3] how, inviolable and invincible, there could not be found, either in this world or in the world of the devas, Mâras, Brahmans, "any who could either scatter his thoughts or cleave his heart";[4] how he was transfigured,[5] and at last, when the time was come,

[1] Title given by the translator of the Dhamma-Kakka-ppavatana Sutta, in vol. xi. of *Sacred Books of the East*.

[2] Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 187, quoting the Pujáwaliya, said to be later than the thirteenth century A.D.

[3] Sutta Nipâta, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Part ii. p. 17.

[4] *Ibid.* vol. x. Part ii. pp. 31, 45.

[5] Mahâparanibhâna Sutta, iv. 49, 50, *ibid.* vol. xi. p. 81.

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accompanied by a disciple very dear to him, how he lay down like a king between two trees. Then when winds were hushed, and streamlets silenced, and flowers from heaven shed their blossoms over him like rain-drops, and a great earthquake rumbled, and the sun and moon hid their faces, and the great Brahma lamented, rising through light to light he achieved the full Nirvana.[1]

It is not wonderful that Christians who have only read or heard of the statements current as to the remarkable coincidences between the miraculous incidents recorded in the Buddhist legends and the Christian Gospels should be perplexed, and that not a few of those who are anti-Christian in their attitude should have almost jumped to the conclusion that the biographers of the two lives must have known of each other's works and borrowed each other's traditions. Examination of the alleged coincidences, however, reveals that there is no occasion for the perplexity in the one case, and no ground for the jubilation in the other. By no honest process of manipulation can we turn the supposed similarities into even probable identities. The incidents illustrate very widely contrasted lives, and enforce dogmas utterly contradictory to each other. If any one is desirous of ascertaining the coincidences

[1] Bigandet, *op. cit.* p. 323; Spence Hardy, *Manual*, p. 347; Mahâparinibhâna Sutta, vi. 11-16.

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which are stated to exist, he will find them clearly set forth and classified by Professor Seydel in his so-called Buddhist Harmony;[1] and if he require any more than his own common sense to guide him to an opinion concerning them, he had better consult the Appendix to Professor Kuenen's Hibbert Lectures on *National Religions and Universal Religions*, Dr. Kellogg's *Light of Asia and Light of the World*, and Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter's article in the *Nineteenth Century*, December 1880, "On the Obligations of the New Testament to Buddhism." These authorities will confirm the judgment which any unbiassed and intelligent juryman would form, from considering the evidence adduced in support of the theory of borrowing, and from a simple comparison of the alleged parallels themselves, that Buddhism had not the smallest direct influence on the origin of Christianity. So fundamentally unlike are the alleged "similarities" that the hypothesis of the derivation of the contents of the Gospels from Buddhist sources is as ridiculous as would be the supposition that the Venus of Milo was copied from the rude idol or hideous fetich of an aboriginal tribe.[2]

[1] *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zur Buddha-Sage und Buddha-Lehre*; Leipzig, 1882.

[2] Let any one compare the prediction of the so-called Indian Simeon, the Nalaka Sutta, in vol. x. p. 125 of *Sacred Books of the East*, with Luke ii. 25; the account of the Temptation by Mara, in the *Romantic Legend*, pp. 204, 224, or in Hardy's *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 183, with Matt. iv. 1; the so-called Transfiguration in Mahâparinibhâna, iv. 49,

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When the missionaries of the two religions first came into actual contact has not yet been ascertained, and the influence of the Christian ideals of self-oblivion upon the most essentially selfish system of salvation ever promulgated to the world has yet to be traced. The conception of self-renunciation which is set forth in the legends may have originated in the memory of the kindness and gentleness and goodness of one whose life was far nobler than his creed, and it may have assumed greater strength and clearness when the teaching of the Gospels came to be reflected upon it. It may or it may not, but of this we may be positively certain, that the writers of the New Testament and the composers of the earliest Buddhist traditions knew positively nothing of each other's productions. This is a conclusion accepted by the very best authorities on the subject, and it is maintained with the greatest

vol. xi. *Sacred Books of the East*, p. 81, with Matt. xvii. 1-8; the feast of the courtesan Ambopali, in Mahâparinibhâna Sutta, ii. 16. 25, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. p. 30, with Christ's treatment of the Magdalene in Luke vii. 36, and he will see at once how improbable and even absurd is the theory that the Evangelists borrowed from the Buddhist compilers. That we are dealing with quite an inferior order of facts is apparent when we compare one of the most touching coincidences, Buddha's last discourse to the Beloved Ananda in Mahâparinibhâna Sutta, v. 34. 35, "Let not yourself be troubled," with John xiv. 1-6. In some of the miracles accompanying the birth and temptations of Buddha, there are not only gross absurdities but positive indecencies, which by the simplicity and modesty and reticence of the Gospel narratives are powerfully condemned. See *Lalita Vistara*, chaps. vi. and vii., and *Buddhist Birth-Stories*, vol. i. pp. 58, 68.

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firmness by those of them who discount the miraculous occurrences found in the scriptures of both religions as only the fond fancies which their affectionate disciples gradually wove around the memories of their respective teachers. They hold that working independently of each other, but under similar influences and in similar conditions, it was simply natural that they should have come to adorn with wonders somewhat alike in character the story of two lives so pure and beneficial.

The learned author of the Hibbert Lectures for 1881 has made some very interesting and important suggestions as to the rise of the Buddhist legends, and as he seems to imply a similar growth of the "Christian legend," it may be advisable to consider both accounts in their relation to the literary sources which profess to authenticate them. Let us assume, therefore, that the Lalita Vistara was actually in circulation about the beginning of the Christian era,[1] and let us take for granted that one

[1] This is a very great assumption indeed. Foucaux, its translator, assigns it to the first century B.C., but T. W. Rhys Davids assigns it to some Nepaulese poet "who lived between six hundred and a thousand years after Buddha's death" (Hibbert Lectures, pp. 197, 204). A Chinese version is said to have been in existence about 70 A.D. Rajendralal Mitra, its English translator, admits this in his Introduction, p. 48, but whether that was a version, or another book altogether, or how far it corresponded with the *Lalita Vistara*, no scholar has been confident to say. Dr. Beal also mentions a life of Buddha by Asvaghosha as probably in circulation about the middle of the Christian ~~era~~ century (*Chinese Buddhism*, p. 73).

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of the oldest Suttas,[1] professing to relate a portion of Buddha's ministry, was extant in the form in which we have it, some three centuries earlier, or a century after Buddha's death. A comparison of these two productions reveals at once the fact that in the earliest there is no reference to the divinity, pre-existence, or supernatural birth of Buddha, and making allowance for the usual exaggeration of language, that there are very few miraculous incidents recorded in it. It has been asserted that Buddha never professed to work a miracle. Certainly the fragments of his original teaching which survive indicate that he would be the first to repudiate all such as have been ascribed to him. Be that as it may, it is a literary fact that in the supposed earliest books only a few miracles are recorded. We may infer therefore that by the time they were composed his orthodox disciples had not formed those conceptions of his person and mission which their pious descendants later on learned to believe and to proclaim.[2]

[1] Mahâparinibhâna Sutta, translated by T. W. Rhys Davids, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi.

[2] The blessed Buddha rebuked Pindola Bhâradvâga (for having won a bowl of sandalwood by performing a miracle), saying, "This is improper, not according to rule, unsuitable, unworthy of a Samana, unbecoming, and ought not to be done. How can you for the sake of a miserable wooden pot display before the laity the superhuman quality of your miraculous power of Iddhi? . . . This will not conduce either to the conversion of the unconverted or to the increase of the converted"

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The Gospels are not the earliest Christian writings, and not several, but many, "narratives concerning those matters which had been fulfilled or established among" Christians, even as they "delivered them who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word,"[1] were probably in circulation before the Gospels were written. Some of the Epistles of St. Paul also, in all probability, preceded those collections of "the words and deeds of the Lord"; but the substance of the three first Gospels was very early produced, and we may be morally certain that they contain the beliefs which the very first generation of Christians entertained concerning Him. The truth of these beliefs is not now under discussion, but only the fact of them, and the kind of people who were influenced by them. It is averred "that the outward conditions in which Buddhism and Christianity arose were similar, and so were the mental qualities of the disciples of both religions";[2] but the conditions were most dissimilar in this respect, that Buddhism originated in the dimness of an unhistoric age, and Christianity in an age and land so irradiated by

(Kullavagga, v. 8. 2). The danger of performing a miracle by power of Iddhi, for self-glorification, is exemplified in the story of Devadatta in Kullavagga, vii. 1. 2, 3. In the Mahavagga, Kullavagga, Sutta Nipâta, and similar books, however, miracles are ascribed to Buddha, and conversions attributed to their performance.

[1] Luke i. 1.

[2] T. W. Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, p. 128.

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the light of history that we know more clearly what was happening then and there than we do of what occurred in Europe a thousand years after. The mental qualities of the disciples of both religions again seem to have been most unlike. About Ananda and his companions we know really nothing but the names, for they meet us in the Buddhist records as mere lay figures, completely resembling one another, and with no individuality to distinguish them.[1] We may assume, however, that they belonged to one or other of the many sects of Brahmans or Sramans, and if so, that they were dreamy and contemplative men, withdrawn from practical life, and finding in the life of meditation a sphere more congenial to them than the actual world of which they were parts. They appear to have been directly and thoroughly unlike to the very marked personalities represented by the Evangelists and the other apostles of Christ, who were all drawn from practical life to be His followers. They were the very reverse of speculative; they had little imagination and almost no poetry in them; they were very dull of comprehension in regard to truths higher than the few which they inherited, and very incredulous about any unwonted occurrence said to have taken place outside the little circle of their own observation. In their conscientious, matter-of-

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 190.

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fact way of looking at things they were the very last men to dream dreams or weave legends around the memory of one whom they revered; and we have their own confession, not of their slowness of apprehension merely, but of their unbelief at first in regard to all supernatural manifestations.

Now while the supernatural only rarely meets us in the most ancient Buddhist productions, where we would naturally have expected it to have predominated, it meets us in the very earliest writings of Christianity, where we would not have expected it at all. Christ to His first disciples and apostles was a miraculous being. The claim formulated in St. John's Gospel, which is probably the latest book in the New Testament, is that advanced for Christ by St. Paul in his earliest extant letter to the churches. The Christ of St. John is not a new Person, but the same Divine Being of whom St. Paul says, "He being in the form of God" was "found on earth in fashion as a man." He may have been all wrong as to the ground of his belief; he may have been an epileptic, a visionary, a man subject to trances, whose intense spiritual affinities disqualified him from judging calmly of matters of history; but there is no mistake as to his own belief and that of the other evangelists and writers of the New Testament. The teaching of St. Paul and St. John concerning Christ is set forth in St. Matthew

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with a clearness which no language can improve upon.[1] St. Mark dwells primarily upon the humanity of Jesus, a most important fact, presenting a historic basis without which Christian truth would have been little more than a mystic speculation; but even in St. Mark that humanity is not described as unfolding under conditions which are merely normal.[2] The life to which he testifies is not just that of Jesus of Nazareth, but of the Christ of God, who speaks with more than human authority. The development which is traceable in the theology of the Epistles is the expansion of the significance of the events recorded in the Gospels. The latest writings may more fully interpret the teaching of the earlier ones, but in them we find no other Gospels, but only anathemas pronounced on those who pretend to have them. In them a larger domain is seen expanding beneath our gaze, but it is visible only in the light of the central figure that meets us in the first. Plainly, therefore, while the earliest Buddhist witnesses account for their master and his teaching in the ordinary ways, and while their successors much later on in their attempts to embellish his portrait have produced quite a different person from the man of whom they first testified, the very earliest Christian writers could

[1] Matthew xi. 27; xxviii. 16-20.

[2] Mark i. 7-11; ii. 10-28; viii. 38; xii. 35-37.

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not account for Christ in any other way than by regarding Him as a supernatural being, who did not come into the world and did not leave it in the way of all other men. It is possible that they may all have been deluded, but if so, they vouched for their sincerity by their martyrdoms. The delusion, moreover, was at least universally and most consistently maintained, and it is the first instance in the history of mankind where a delusion has produced intellectual activity and expansion so wonderful as to have changed the current of history, and originated the great throbbing ever-enlarging world of Christendom which confronts us now.

Another significant contrast between the two sets of writings is found in the fact that while we can dissociate the miraculous elements from the Buddhist Pitakas without detriment to their other contents, we find it impossible to apply the same process with the like results to the New Testament. No one questions that primitive Buddhism is improved by being freed from the portents which subsequently gathered around it, for primitive Buddhism is an intellectual and moral system, a theory of the universe more likely to be obscured than elucidated by an appeal to the supernatural. Christianity, however, while appealing both to intellect and conscience, does so as the revelation of a life which, as a new thing, might break through

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all men's conceptions of what was ordinary or necessary. The first appearance of life on this planet as an unwonted phenomenon would be accompanied by manifestations miraculous to all who only judged by experience of what had already been. So would be the first appearance of man to those who judged of things by what was possible to the actual animal world. That the manifestation of One who had come that men might have life, and have it more abundantly, should be accompanied with phenomena new and strange to mankind might have been expected. Christ, as revealing an ideal of excellence to which things as they are in nature, and men as they now are in society, do not conform, will in truth contradict the present working of both. This at least is the impression inevitably produced by the reading of the New Testment. Its teaching is throughout founded upon, and it would be quite unintelligible without reference to, the supernatural. To dissociate the miraculous portions from the rest of its contents would be not only to mutilate but to destroy it.[1] Not the theological and metaphysical elements only, but even "the ethical, are so interwoven into one fibre with the supernatural in the New Testament that it is impossible to detach them without destroying the whole fabric."[2]

[1] Pressensé, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 373.

[2] Cox, *Commentary on Job*, p. 19.

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Verily a Gospel without the miracles and all that accounts for them would be a very strange book.

Another very distinctive feature in the New Testament accounts is displayed in the character of the wonders there recorded. Indeed, this distinguishing element is found in all the miraculous narratives of the Bible. If it be true that the ancient writers or redactors of Scripture have employed the legends of other nations to illustrate their works, it must be conceded that they have immensely improved, and made a much better use of them. The story of the creation of the world, of the primeval paradise, and of the deluge, may be only myths common to several nations, but somehow, while all other writers just lose themselves in these myths, the Hebrews alone have laid hold of them to enforce the sublimest views ever formulated in human speech concerning the origin of the world and of man. The narratives of the Old Testament are evidently not constructed to startle the reader with portents, but to disclose the providential dealings of a holy and merciful God with man to enlighten and save him. The Gospels in like manner are not written to record miraculous occurrences, nor are miracles introduced to glorify Christ: they are simply referred to as incidents in His ministry. When we compare the prodigies ascribed to Buddha

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during the many changes of his pre-existence, or during his ministry, with the miracles of the Gospels, they are like the rough casts in clay or wood made by a rude or childish people contrasted with the perfect productions of nature in the world of animals or of men. They may endure comparison with the portents found in the Apocryphal books, or in the Lives of the Saints, but placed side by side with the Gospel miracles they serve only to illustrate the difference between what is artificial and grotesque, and what is original and natural. There is a marked sobriety in the Gospel accounts totally lacking in the Buddhist legends. The latter serve no other end but to exalt and magnify Buddha,[1] but the Gospel miracles are all founded in some great human necessity which they are intended to supply. The Buddhist marvels are simply produced to startle us, the Christian are recorded as signs to instruct us. What a gulf separates the conception of Buddha leaping high in air amid the sounding of the bells of the heavens and the plaudits of all the gods, just to prove that he was Buddha, from the account of Christ's refusal to work a miracle to win the adherence of the crowd, or give the sign from heaven to vanquish Sadducean unbelief! The

[1] See Mahavagga, i. pp. 15-20, for specimens of the "three thousand five hundred" wonders of Buddha. "The marvellous in the Gospels is but sober good sense compared with what we find in . . . the Hindu European mythologies" (Renan, *Études d'histoire Relig.* pp. 177, 203).

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Gospel miracles are few after all, but they all flow from and are in harmony with the original idea of Christ as Messiah which is assumed in all the Gospels. The mighty works done by Him are all such as might be expected to be done in a world like this by the Son of a heavenly Father. The cure of all manner of disease, the exorcism of all the evil spirits that have afflicted humanity, the victory over death, the control of all the forces of nature, were all in the scope of one who came hither to establish the kingdom of God. Christ's miracles were all signs of man's present and prophecies of his future relations to all the evils that afflict him. They all remind us of the Divine original ideal that man, perfectly obedient to God, must exercise dominion over His creatures in this world. Man's present antagonism to nature, and the disorder seen in his own social relations, are alike due to his refusal to merge his will in God's, and the miracles of our Saviour are all prophecies that when through obedience to or faith in God he shall be restored to holiness, he will find his social and external relations improved, and will regain over nature that spiritual authority which even already the winds and the waves in part recognise and obey.[1]

Again, the New Testament writers claim for Christ what the early disciples of Buddha never

[1] Godet, *Lectures in Defence of the Christian Faith*, pp. 118-161.

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dreamed of claiming for their master, and they insist upon their claim, though it is associated with the meanest and apparently most contradictory of elements. It is not the glorification but the humiliation of Christ which constitutes the marvel in the Gospels. It was very natural that the Evangelists should imagine that the angels should sing over the birth of a Saviour, but it was not natural that they should conceive of them singing over a babe in a manger. It was not wonderful, again, for Jews to believe that the coming of their Messiah was divinely announced, but it is very wonderful that they should believe that this annunciation was made to unknown shepherds. It was certainly not in that way their Messiah was expected to come. Had He come in the way they expected, the miracles might naturally have been accounted for which they associated with His coming; but, as matter of fact, it requires the miracle to account for their belief in Him. And so it is all through in the Gospels. That the Messiah should be discovered to be the Son of God need not surprise us, but that the Son of God should be recognised by Jews in the form of a servant, enduring patiently the contradiction of sinners, submitting to trial, to torture, to death on the cross, is one of the greatest marvels in the whole history of religion. This combination of glory and shame was a difficulty in

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the way of faith, not a help or support of it. The claim, we must remember, was not advanced for Christ by the Evangelists after He died; it was formulated by Himself, and by Him it was asserted more conspicuously, and with greater frequency and emphasis toward the close of His earthly life. It was the only charge on which He was condemned; all other accusations brought against Him broke down; but this one He admitted—that He called Himself the Son of God. Questioned upon it, He would not retract. "Thou sayest," was all His reply, and for the saying He was ordered to the cross. Yet upon the cross His assertion was strengthened. Had He been a pretender, He would never have so comported Himself before Pilate and Herod; had He been self-deluded, He never would have said to His fellow-sufferer on Calvary: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The torture of crucifixion was sufficient to expel the hallucinations of the maddest brain, but the Evangelists show that while faith in His Messiahship was, during His crucifixion, fading even from His disciples, in Himself it was stronger than ever, and at the very last it was communicated to a dying robber, who trusted that He had power to absolve him, and to open to him the gates of a better life. Now, all this surely never could naturally have occurred to Jewish men to conceive, and if their

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records be only fictions, the devout creations of over fond imaginations, then their legends are miracles themselves.

Some one has said that it is possible to find in the Buddhist books a parallel to every incident in the Gospels; if so, these parallels will be found to be very far apart; but to the incident of the Crucifixion there can be no parallel. That one historical event separates not only the two systems of thought and belief, but marks off Christianity from all other religions in the world. Till the crucifixion of Jesus was accomplished, the idea of associating with Deity humiliation, and of conceiving of God as dying the death of a slave upon the cross, would have been regarded as the grossest impiety. The fundamental idea of the Incarnation was not wholly foreign to the mind either of India or of Greece; to the Jew it was not a natural thought, but one so anti-Semitic that Jew and Moslem alike have rejected Christianity because of it;[1] but the incarnation of Deity represented in the Gospels, the humiliation of the Godhead implied in the Crucifixion, is an idea which never could have originated in the mind of either Gentile or Jew. It is one of the things of God which the natural man cannot conceive, a mystery hid from all ages until it was revealed, and

[1] Dr. Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, p. 201; Dr. Fairbairn, *Studies in Religion as a Philosophy*, p. 36.

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apparently, unless we admit the reality of the revelation, we never can account for the faith.

The miraculous personality of Christ is thus the outstanding and distinctive feature of the Christian writings. As the mists clear away in the East, Buddha emerges more and more in the stature of a good and great man, but Christ rises upon us as one who cannot be accounted for according to the measure of any man, nor even that of an angel. It is not as a teacher, a guide out of the difficulties of life, that He meets us, but as a Revealer and Saviour. It is thus He has been accepted by His disciples, and upon their faith He has reared His Church. It is thus He conceived of Himself, and His conception is not more astounding than are the simplicity and lowliness and meekness of His character. He is Himself thus the miracle of miracles, wholly inexplicable on any human theory devised to account for Him; and till that one miracle is solved, all questions as to the miracles which are ascribed to Him can afford to wait for their solution.

We have no desire to exaggerate the value of the miraculous elements in Christianity, but it does not appear to be true wisdom that would depreciate them or ignore them altogether. Miracles by many have been wrongly considered, and they have been often expounded by the advocates of

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Christianity in such a way as to create instead of removing difficulties connected with the faith. On the other hand, many who reject or refuse to consider them seem afflicted by a kind of mental semeiophobia which in its own way may be as dangerous an affliction as hydrophobia is. The proper way is to consider them in relation to the nature and purpose of the Revelation with which they are associated. The miracle may sometimes be found only in the form of the narrative, as a hieroglyph whose purpose we are too lazy to search for, whose meaning we are too stupid to elucidate. The theory that miracles are only figurative expressions of spiritual truth is not true, as it is generally expounded; but it has a truth in it which must never be overlooked. Every miracle is a parable, and every parable is a miracle. It is the spiritual reality revealed by both which gives them value, and not the wonder in them by which we are at first arrested. Yet without the wonder to arrest us we might never have received the revelation. "What did the apostle mean," asks Robert Elsmere,[1] "by death to sin and self? what the precise idea attached by him to being risen with Christ? Are this death and resurrection necessarily dependent upon certain alleged historical events, or are they not primarily, and were there

[1] P. 58, one-vol. edition.

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not, even in Paul's mind, two aspects of a spiritual process perpetually re-enacted in the soul of man, and constituting the veritable revelation of God? Which is the stable and lasting witness of the Father? the spiritual history of the individual and of the world, or the envelope of miracle to which hitherto mankind has attached such importance?" The envelope certainly would be as worthless without the message which it carries as a husk from which the kernel has dropped. Would St. Paul, however, ever have conceived the spiritual truths referred to, if they had not been suggested by historical facts? Could he ever have conceived of a death to sin had the world never witnessed the death of the Holy Christ upon the cross? Could he ever have dreamed of rising again in the power of a new life if the tomb in the garden nigh Golgotha had never been found empty of its crucified occupant? Is he not just suggesting the significance of very exceptional historical events? He may be wrong in his interpretation, but there can be no mistake that the interpretation is founded upon the history, that it was the event which originated his theory, and not his theory that produced the story of the event. Christian theology, instead of giving this miraculous character to the tragic story of the life and death of Christ, has been called into existence by man's endeavours to

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account for it as a fact not only marvellous, but simply unique in the experience of mankind.

It is not likely that the miraculous elements in the Christian religion will be found to be "the produce of its primitive theology, which will fade out of the conception of men as theology advances and becomes purified." The demonstration of this must not be assumed to be complete because the miraculous is also found in other religions. We must be able to account for it in all of them. It is, indeed, the natural tendency of humanity to magnify and eventually to deify its heroes, to embellish their careers with similar marvels, to apply to them figurative language very liable to be misunderstood, which in later generations hardens into erroneous beliefs. That Christians as well as Buddhists have done so is sufficiently attested by the apocryphal Gospels, but we must not conclude that because there are so many fictitious and counterfeit wonders in currency there can be no real miracles. We must examine each religion on its merits, and its miraculous elements in the light of their purpose and of their actual genesis; and if we do so in the case of Christianity, we will probably discover the one supernatural reality from which the shadows in all other religions are reflected, and to which they all point.[1]

[1] Trench, Hulsean Lectures, p. 150.

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Dr. Rhys Davids, in the Hibbert Lectures, informs us that the early Buddhist conception of Gotama was dominated and transformed by two ideals, neither of which had any necessary connection with the man himself. One of them, due to political experience, made him finally assume in the popular imagination the office of a Universal King; while the other, due to philosophic speculation, invested him with the attribute of Perfect Wisdom. The implied parallel between this conception, coloured as it grew by the sun myths which it incorporated, and the Christian conception of Jesus, suggested by the titles King of Glory and Divine Word, is obvious to everybody. Yet examination of the supposed similarities only reveals essential contrasts between the two sets of beliefs. The political experiences in India which are referred to occurred about two centuries after the death of Buddha. The victories of Chandragupta, resulting in the consolidation of a kingdom such as Indians had never before witnessed, combined with his patronage of the Buddhist monks, may have suggested the idea of the universal monarch. "His achievements recalled the nearly forgotten poetry of the Vedic legends, while the new and popular ethics of Buddha invested him with a righteousness which made him a worthy Lord of the Four Quarters (of the Globe)." So in one of the Suttas,

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said to be early, and which may have been assuming shape at this time, words like these are put in the mouth of Buddha:—"I am a king, O Sela, an incomparable, religious king; with justice I roll the wheel, the wheel that is irresistible."[1] With this conception of Cakka-vatti, a glorious king, was connected, avers Dr. Rhys Davids, that of an age in which plenty and peace were to abound as the fruits of righteousness.[2] The idea of a golden age is common to most religions, and as the Western Aryans always preserved it, we may conclude that the branch which reached India carried it thither with them. Soon, however, as the belief in transmigration took possession of them, they seem to have lost it. Their book of the generations of man did not mount higher than the Fall; existence was essentially evil in their thought, and belief in a golden age on earth, either in the past or in the future, was quite inconsistent with the creed which Buddhists inherited or created. The other branch of the Aryan stock so cherished it that it adorns their most beautiful mythologies; but even with them the golden age was always placed in the past, and the world, fallen from good, was supposed to be degenerating from bad to worse. And so it is that the fondest glances of even the happy Greek are

[1] Sutta Nipâta, translated by Fausböll in vol. x. p. 102; parallel suggested to John xviii. 37. [2] Hibbert Lectures, pp. 144-147.

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not forward but backward cast, and that sadness mingles with his most mirthful music.

It is possible at least that changes so favourable to the fortunes of the new religion, and the social reforms which followed its extension, may have awakened in the pious the memories of old Vedic faith; and that the victories of Chandragupta may have suggested to the authors of the Suttas the idea of the invincible Buddha advancing through the ages, as the chariot-wheel of the sun disperses the clouds in the heavens. It is certain, however, that neither Buddha nor his earliest disciples ever dreamed of applying the title of Cakkavatti to or of associating the promise of a better time with himself. To old Vedic faith as supporting his teaching or predicting his mission he never appealed; he ignored all previous teaching: and indeed in ancient Indian teaching, uninspired by either promise or hope, there is nothing prophetic. In the case of Christianity it is quite the contrary. The conception of the Messiah as the righteous and glorious King, under whose reign all the world would be blessed, was not suggested by political experience two centuries after the dawn of Christianity. It was formulated and predicted many centuries before the coming of Christ. The Hebrew, like the Aryan, never lost the memory of a happy past, but, unlike the Aryan, he placed

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his paradise not only in the past but in the future. With far richer materials at his command than the Aryan seems to have possessed for painting a vanished golden age, the Hebrew poets made very sparing use of them. A few paragraphs exhaust all they have to say as to the traditions of a paradise that had been lost, but their whole Bible is full of the hope of the good time which is coming to all the world. This hope, centred as it was in their Messiah, Christianity from the very first took up and promised to fulfil. The ministry of Jesus was scarcely begun before it was associated with Him. Among the first questions asked concerning Him was, "Is not this Messias?" Among the earliest declarations made was, "We have found the Messias." Very soon in His career He confessed, "I that speak unto thee am He!" The Gospels and Epistles would be unintelligible without this perpetual reference to Messianic prediction; it is the golden thread which runs through all the Old Testament and unites it with the New. In its Messianic hope, Old Testament prophecy reached its highest and purest development, and the New Testament claims that in Christ it is finding its fulfilment. It may be alleged of course that the prophecy and the claim are alike delusions, but the prophecy at least was a fact, and its application to Christ was no legendary growth

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of a later generation, but the original and essential testimony of the earliest Christian teachers.

The other conception of Perfect Wisdom represented by Buddha the Awakened or Enlightened One is also confessedly an aftergrowth. The earliest traces which we have of Gotama after his death disclose him as a man who gained his knowledge by severe struggle, and who therefore, in the estimation of his followers, was a "Jina" or conqueror. As time went on, and his memory rose in the estimation of later generations, the faithful, guided by their belief in transmigration, projected this struggle for Buddhahood further and further into former stages of existence, till at last the idea was conceived that he was only one of a long series of Buddhas, of whom he was not to be the last. The development of this interesting speculation, with its distinctions into Buddhas who only save themselves—Paccekabuddhas—and the Sammâsambuddhas, who appear at very rare intervals, able and willing to save to the uttermost, need not here be traced. It is sufficient to note how unlike and contradictory is this belief to that which dominates in our religion. In Christ we have the *only* Messiah, and He, having once come, we do not look for another. The hope of the Christian is fixed upon His coming again in glory; but it is the coming again of the *same*

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Jesus. The unity of Deity colours and pervades all our thoughts of Divine communications with mankind; "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man." Consequently the doctrine of the Divine Word formulated in connection with Christ in St. John's Gospel represents a very different set of ideas from the conception of Buddha as the Perfect Wisdom, to whom all worlds and all times were open. That conception of Buddha was probably an incorporation into the Buddhist creed from foreign sources, but the idea of Christ as the Son, "unto whom all things have been delivered by the Father," so that "no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him," was a common one among the very earliest Christians of whom we have any trace. St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Paul, St. Luke all preach Christ, "unto whom has been committed all knowledge and judgment," "who is before all things, and in whom all things consist," "the image of the invisible God, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell." [1]

And so it is not in the latest Gospel but in the

[1] Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Introd. pp. 56-60, 64-70; Liddon, Bampton Lectures, 1866, pp. 364-380; Lange, *Life of Christ*, vol. i. pp. 121-124.

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earliest Scriptures that we have the first indications of this doctrine as Christ the Word, though in the latest, as we might expect, it is more clearly formulated and more fully expounded. Written after the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the ancient Church, and the recognition of the Gentiles as fellow-heirs, by one who was quite conscious of the new intellectual position which Christianity occupied in relation to the speculations of Syria and Egypt, and of the dangers which thereby accrued to the faith, its author took up a term very current at the time in theosophic and metaphysical writings, and specially those of Philo, to set forth the truth of the Life whose manifestation he had witnessed. That St. John did not borrow the term from Philo is evident from the very different use which he has made of it, and the very different purpose which he had in view. By it Philo expressed the conception of Divine intelligence in the abstract, while St. John employed it to suggest the concrete idea of God's personal action. Both found it in the Septuagint and the Hebrew traditional lore;[1] but while Philo gave it a Greek, St. John adhered to its Hebrew significance. The first chapter of St. John compared with a page of Philo[2] will reveal at once the differ-

[1] *E.g.* the Targums.

[2] *E.g. De Opific. Mund.* i. 4; *De Mundi incor.* § 16, 17.

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ence between them, and convince us that the teaching of Philo concerning the Logos leads further and further away from the idea of the incarnation which is the foundation-truth of the teaching of St. John. His doctrine would be quite unintelligible as an application or continuation of the doctrine of Philo, but it is intelligible and consistent as the final co-ordination of truths concerning the Divine Being disclosed in the Old Testament viewed by a man whose antecedents and modes of thought were very different from those of the Alexandrian sage.[1]

The ideas suggested by the "Angel of the Presence" in the historic and prophetic books, by the "Word of the Lord" in the Psalms, and by "Wisdom" in the Books of Wisdom, indicate the rays which converge in St. John's doctrine of the Christ. As one who tarried long after the first generation of Christians had gone to their rest, as one who had not only pondered longer, and in deeper silence, the Life he had seen manifested, but who had found its interpretation in such providences as the spreading of the Churches and the destruction of the State, he was abler to meet the necessities of a wider age, by setting the truth in rounder form and clearer light; but while he ex-

[1] Sears, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 220 *seq.*; Westcott, *Introduction to St. John*, pp. xvi, xvii; Dorner, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 327-332.

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pands and expounds the teaching of the first generation, he adds and introduces not a single element. His testimony is identical with that proclaimed at the Resurrection, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, and that Christ is the only begotten Son of God.

It is not as one who has acquired truth by long struggle, not as one who has fought or forced His way to light, that Christ presents Himself in the Gospels, but as one who can say: "I am the way, the truth, the life," "the light of the world." Yet along with this stupendous demand upon the faith of humanity there is a humility and simplicity undiscoverable in the Buddha of the Pitakas. Self-consciousness, self-reliance, self-culture—these are the phrases most suggestive of the system and of the life of the great Indian sage, while not self-abasement, but self-oblivion, characterises the teaching and life of Jesus of Nazareth. Identity with the Highest, manifested by absolute surrender to Him, is the essence of the Revelation of Christ. Always is the Father confessed to be the source of all grace and truth, and if the Son asks to be glorified, it is that the Father may be glorified in Him. We are certainly not contemplating similarities when we look at the Buddha of the Suttas and the Christ of the Gospels, but contrasts more widely separated than the soul is from the body. In Buddha we

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have a historical personage, who can be thoroughly accounted for as the product and outgrowth of his past, and of his environment; in Christ we have one whom no philosophy of history has ever explained. Alone and unapproachable, He meets us as one who is really human, because He has become man, one who has arisen among men to save them, but because He has come through and to them. He is not just one of the many, a son of men, the product of a divinely-trained humanity, but the Son of Man, who as Son of God, incarnated in the nature of all men, has become the Head and Creator of a new humanity. Correct, improve, embellish as we may, the portrait left us of the gentle teacher of Magadha, we never can lift him up to that level which would justify his being worshipped or being addressed, as Jesus of Nazareth has been by the consensus of all the Christian ages, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father."

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LECTURE IV.

THE DHARMA OF BUDDHA :[1] THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

WHAT was the discovery that rewarded Gotama's long travail and conflict under the Bo-tree at Bohimanda, and gained for him the title of Buddha, the Awakened or Enlightened One? and what was the message of "glad tidings" which since then has made so many millions of the human race regard him as their Deliverer? We shall never obtain the answer to these questions if we follow the legends and the later scriptures, although they profess to give all the steps of the process by which he wrought out his deliverance. These all date from

[1] *Dharma*, an ancient Brahman term, meaning law or order; what holds things as they are, or ought to be. In later Sanskrit it also means duty and virtue, *i.e.* law performed.—Gifford Lectures, *Natural Religion*, pp. 94, 95. *Buddha* is also an ancient Brahman term applied to one who has attained a perfect knowledge of the Self.—Satapatha-brahmana, xiv. 7. 2. 17. In Buddhism Dharma means Buddha's doctrines, "bodhi," *i.e.* knowledge self-acquired, as distinguished from "Veda," *i.e.* revelation obtainable only through the Brahmans.—Sir Monier Williams' *Buddhism*, p. 97.

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a time when the seeds which he had sown among the thorns of uncleansed superstitions, had grown up into as gigantic and tangled a jungle of speculation as the world has ever seen. Had he confronted his day and generation proclaiming as the result of his laborious and painful inquiries the complicated metaphysical system formulated in these books, he would have made few converts. He might have become the head of another sect, the founder of another school, but he never would have established a religion so extensive as that which for so many centuries, and among so many peoples, has been known by his name.

Following the Southern scriptures, and guided by the eminent Oriental scholars who have made them available by translations, we may be able to trace, in the wild growth of fancy which has grown up around them, the leading lines of the original teaching. The real doctrine of Buddha did not profess to be a philosophy inquiring into the ultimate ground of things. He is represented as having despised philosophisings, and as having inveighed against profitless questionings as earnestly as did St. Paul against vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called.[1] His object was

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, pp. 205-208; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 87; Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 375. His relation to the philosophical systems of his day is illustrated in several Suttas; see

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avowedly practical, and he kept silent when asked concerning themes whose discussion did not tend to "illumination and quiet." Notwithstanding this, there must have been from the first, even in the earliest forms of his teaching, ideas and thoughts beyond the comprehension of the simple. For a while he hesitated, as we have seen, to proclaim his discovery, because "the way" was too hidden for men to know, and too hard, even when known, for them to follow. Like the Jewish Scribe, he conceived that to the wise alone, and not to the ignorant, belonged the law, and to the wise alone was reserved the hope of final deliverance. To children, and to the uninstructed struggling classes, the preaching was not made fully known, as really beyond them. Unlike Christ, whose preaching was for all without exception, whose gospel, though full of mystery, confers illumination even on babes, the law of Buddha was in its entirety for the sages only, and instead of conferring knowledge on those who obeyed it, it made knowledge a condition of obtaining deliverance. Nevertheless, though the deductions were within the grasp only of the few, his popularity proves that his fundamental and principal dogmas must have been such as all could understand, and they seem

Sutta Nipâta, in vol. x. Part ii. of *Sacred Books of the East*, pp. 148-152. Evidently he regarded them with aversion, and even contempt.

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to have been published, as Saint-Hilaire observes, in a language so "simple and vernacular" as to induce even the children and the ignorant to enter the paths that lead to deliverance.[1]

He entered upon his travail, in order to find a way of escape from the endless cycles of unsatisfying change, and he believed that he had discovered it. Leavening every part of his system is his impression of the universality of suffering; and suffering, its origin, its extinction, and the path or method that leads to its extinction, are the so-called "four noble truths" which constitute in Buddhism the "Law of the Wheel." In Buddhism the wheel is the dominant symbol, corresponding to the cross in Christianity, and he who would preach or roll onward the wheel must present to the affectionate consideration of the hearers these "four sacred verities" —the verity of suffering, the verity that concupiscence is the cause of suffering, the verity that concupiscence can be quenched in Nirvana, and the verity that the way that leads to Nirvana is the sublime eightfold path of Buddha's law. From his

[1] *Le Bouddha, etc.*, p. 79. The legends indicate that his use of the vernacular was matter of principle. Two Brahmans, "excelling in speech, excelling in pronunciation," complained that the monks corrupted the word of the Buddhas by repeating it in their own dialect, and asked permission to put it into classical or polished verse. "How can you, O foolish ones, speak thus? . . . You are not, O monks, to put the words of the Buddhas into polished (Sanskrit) verse. Whosoever does so shall be guilty of a dukkata."—Kullavagga, v. 33. 1; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx.

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first public discourse at Benares—corresponding to our Lord's Sermon on the Mount—on to his last words on the night on which he died, this, with manifold amplifications, but ever as the one pathetic refrain, is the substance of his teaching, "through not understanding and grasping which, O monks, we have had to run and wander so long in weary paths, both you and I."[1]

The primitive creed of Buddhism was different from, though not wholly antagonistic to, the popular creed or theory of life of Brahmanism. Weighed by Brahmanism, existence was found wanting, as only illusion, a specious something which truly was a mere nothing, and identity of the personal with the universal self was the only reality. By Buddhism existence was condemned, not as an illusion, but as wholly and solely suffering.[2] "What think ye, O disciples: whether is more, the water that is in the four great oceans, or the tears which have flown from you, and have been shed by you, while ye strayed and wandered in this long pilgrimage, and sorrowed and wept, because that which ye abhorred was your portion, and that which ye loved was not your portion?"[3] It was not

[1] Mahâparanibhâna Sutta, ii. 1. 2; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi.; Mahavagga, i. 6. 18, 27; *ibid.* vol. xiii.

[2] Not as the Nothing, as Wuttke tries to show in *Geschichte des Heidenthums*, ii. § 166. Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 212.

[3] Samyutta-ka-Nikâya, quoted by Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 217.

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"vanity of vanities!" but "misery of miseries! all is misery!" Life was misery, because governed by the immeasurable and wretched past; death was misery, because opening up an equally immeasurable and wretched future. As long as man exists he must be miserable, unable to "cease his wanderings," and "still from one sorrow to another thrown." The only deliverance conceivable from this interminable evil would be to break the bands of existence altogether. "Surely 'twere better not to be." And how "not to be" seems to have been the problem which Buddha professed to solve.

May we not conclude with Saint-Hilaire that this, "his first dogma, was his first fatal error"?[1] With all his intellectual ability he never sought to emancipate himself from the superstition and nightmare of transmigration. Though he had cast off all faith in the government of a divine power, he never questioned the belief with which the lower aboriginal races had infected the thought of his ancestors, that life was governed by this law. It is averred that he found it necessary to solve the conflict between his ideas of justice and the actual order of things, which has exercised the human mind always and everywhere. A modern Buddhist, fortunate in having Mr. Alabaster to introduce him to the notice of an English-reading public, so propounds this

[1] *Bouddha et sa Religion*, p. iii, Introduction.

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belief, and, purged from some of its errors, tries to vindicate it. "For the law of perfect justice," he says, "demands that human conditions should be equalised, and that good and bad luck should be balanced sometime and somewhere. If a good man be poor and wretched now, he must be reaping the fruits of what he had sown in a previous stage of existence."[1] Yet surely this is a very superficial theory for an Oriental professing Western culture to formulate. It is judging of life as children and savages judge of it, by the evidence of the senses, and according to a very inferior and inaccurate standard of good and evil. Poverty and suffering, though confessedly painful, may not be regarded by a good man as wholly evil in this world. Circumstances which the savage and the child would covet as realising their dreams of paradise may be the reverse of desirable to the mature and thoughtful man. The believers in transmigration make no distinction between what is evil and what is simply painful. Evil is not that which pains, but that which defiles and degrades and destroys, and good is not just that which pleases, but that which elevates and ennobles and purifies. The law of absolute justice does not require, as the modern Buddhist demands, that human conditions should be equalised, and that

[1] "The Modern Buddhist," published in the volume called *The Wheel of the Law: Buddhism illustrated from Siamese Sources*, by H. Alabaster; London, 1876.

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all men should be treated alike; for no two human beings all the world over are absolutely alike; but it demands that each should receive the treatment most conducive to his healthy growth as a moral being, and what appears to sense as the harder lot may commend itself to reason as the better portion of the man to whom it has been assigned, because most suited to his need.

The dogma of transmigration is said to occupy in the Buddhist system a position analogous to that of the Fall in our Christian theology; but in reality the two are diametrically opposed, both in their essential ideas and the consequences which flow from them. They are analogous only in respect that they each profess to account for the conflict between man's ideal of himself and his actual condition. The existence of evil is admitted by both, but the Buddhist believes that evil belongs to the very essence of man, and therefore he can find no prospect of relief from it, here or hereafter. For as long as the stream of existence continues it will always fall below its source, and evil, according to the inexorable rule of nature, will propagate only evil. The Hebrew, however, did not conceive of it as essential to or as always in the nature of man. His ancestral beliefs carry him beyond the Fall; his pedigree starts with the most sublime of all theories of human origin that has ever been formulated in

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human speech: "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let him have dominion over" the creature. Dominion over nature man has not, for he is too much under its dominion, and to this subjection much of his suffering is directly traceable. The Hebrew professed to have the origin of this condition revealed to him in a breach between man and his Maker, consequent upon man's self-assertion and selfish withdrawal of his life from the source of life, which must involve suffering and death. So through all the weary generations there is the same invariable sequence of sin entering the world, and death by sin. And yet at his very worst the Hebrew believed that it was once far better with the human race, and on this belief he dared to rear the structure of his magnificent hope, that mankind shall be restored to the original close relationship with God, and therefore to a grander dominion over nature, and to a happier and even more prosperous life than that of which his ancestors had dreamed as their primeval state.

Whatever may be said of the doctrine of the Fall, belief in it is indeed "a condition of hope,"[1] and the belief and the hope both spring from their faith in God as Creator and Governor of the race, which characterised the Hebrew prophets. Wherever that faith is lively, it not only sustains man

[1] Dr. Westcott, *Social Aspects of Christianity*, p. 12; Aristotle, *Ethic.* i. 1; iv. 3.

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amid the sufferings of life, but it nerves him to struggle with physical and moral evil to vanquish it. The purer the faith the more resolute is the struggle; the holier the Deity becomes to the thought of man the stronger becomes his conviction that life is a blessing, and that all its struggles may conduce to peace. There is an instinct which seems to suggest that there are worse things than troubles, and that they may be blessings of no mean quality after all. Christianity has made the startling revelation that suffering is not peculiar to man, as the consequence of his perversity in traversing the Divine order; for not only is Christ presented to us as the greatest sufferer, but in Him God the highest and the holiest is disclosed as involved in it, and as taking upon Himself the responsibilities and the sufferings which our sin and need entail. But if in Christ there is revealed the greatest sufferer, it is as one whose suffering is not in vain. By suffering He conquers that which has produced it; by enduring suffering He ends it; and He reigns and finds His blessedness in making us partakers of His victory over it. So again Christianity, unlike other religions which promise salvation *from* suffering, offers salvation *through* suffering. It alone asserts the utility of suffering; others regard it as evil, Christianity as evil overruled for good. Others reckon it as a mere loss or waste, Christianity as

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something that may be turned to profit as the condition and preparation for joy. Joy in the Christian conception is not the reward of suffering, nor compensation for suffering, but the fruit and issue of suffering which leads to it, as travail leads to birth. So instead of evading or ignoring it, Christ would have us recognise and acquiesce in it, and even be thankful for it, as necessary not for our personal profit, but for the gain of mankind. By His sufferings we are healed, and through our sufferings we fill up what remains of His for the redemption of the world. Only through "the long travail of ages yet to be" will there be born in the evolution of God's redemptive purpose that better race from which all suffering shall have passed away, because disobedience will have had an end. Fellowship in Christ's sufferings has thus transfigured the afflictions of all who believe in Him. Unlike the Indian, tortured by endless change, without any evolution from low to higher, from evil or imperfect to what is good and perfect, the Christian can endure suffering not only patiently but also cheerfully, knowing that he is suffering not just for his own sake, but that in ways mysterious he is lightening the load of many, and helping to bring to an end the long anguish of the whole creation.

But of this consolation which comes from faith in God the Creator, and therefore the Redeemer of

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man from destruction, Buddha had deprived himself. Unlike the Brahman who sought escape from the evils of transmigration by a process of subsidence into the universal Self, he professed to find no trace of this Absolute Self. The Brahman postulated the Infinite and reasoned from it, but Buddha started from quite the opposite pole. He professed to deal with life as he found it, and so reasoning from man outward, he asserted that the necessity for transmigration was involved, not in the illusion of Brahma, but in man's own character. Instead of being a natural or divine necessity, it was a moral necessity created by man, which having its cause in his own action could also by him be destroyed.

And so Pantheistic speculation, in this instance at least, ripened into its proper fruit. The passage from conceiving Deity as characterless passionless self, to discarding Deity altogether from human thought, is a sure and generally a very rapid one. When we come to think of Deity as of being diffused and dispersed, we will soon omit the thought altogether in the recognition only of physical force. Brahmanic speculation had resolved the deities of the ancient books into abstractions, and Buddha recognised no such abstractions in the government of human life. His creed was fundamentally atheistic, as directly contradicting belief in a

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supreme ruler of the universe.[1] Not that he denied the existence of the gods believed in by his countrymen. On the contrary, he allowed them to continue in the popular thought and speech, and even encouraged disciples who had not yet reached the highest knowledge to try to acquire merit by virtue, so as to secure after death a re-birth into their society. Similarly he admitted the existence of devils or demons, and their influence for evil upon man. All through his career he was beset by Mara, the sensual king of all who submit to him; but Buddha was superior not only to Mara, but to all the gods in the popular pantheon, for they, alike with the lowest and the weakest of things, were subject to the law of transmigration. Man might rise to a higher heaven than what they occupied; they might fall to the lowest hell. "Their worlds must perish like that of man, and if ever they attained to final salvation, it could only be by the same way in which a worm might hope to reach it."[2] Throwing his "plummet down the broad deep universe," he cried, "Gods many," but no god able to save. All alike with men were bound in fetters, because ignorant of the

[1] "The Modern Buddhist," Alabaster, *Wheel of the Law*, p. 73; Spence Hardy, *Eastern Monachism*, pp. 5, 339; Gogerly's translation of the Brahmajala Sutta in Digha Nikâya, *Journal of Ceylon Asiatic Society*, 1846.

[2] Preface to Müller's Dhammapada, p. xxx, old ed.

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truth he knew. Naturally, therefore, they are represented in the legends as profiting by his preaching and as seeking unto him for instruction, while those of them who refused, or could not walk in his ways, came to be regarded with pity.[1]

In like manner his creed was as essentially materialistic. Man was no spiritual being, but a bundle of Sankharas—a term, it is said, very difficult to translate, but implying that person meant a mass of "forms" or material qualities so changing as to be never the same for two consecutive moments. Belief in a soul he regarded as a heresy, which he distinctly classed with sensuality and belief in the efficacy of sacrificial rites.[2] To the heart as the sixth sense he ascribed the power of conceiving ideas without form, as the eye had the power of perceiving objects; but this disappeared in dissolution as completely as did the others, and what was re-born was not the soul but the quality, the merit or demerit acquired. This startling assertion of Bishop Bigandet's[3] has been confirmed and amplified by others, specially by Rhys Davids, and so the question at once suggests itself,

[1] Note at pp. 31, 32 of Dhammapada in vol. x. of *Sacred Books of the East.* Frankfurter, App. *Bamp. Lect.* 1881, p. 349.

[2] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 95; Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 388; Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, quoting Bhikkuni Samyutta, p. 258; Colebrooke's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 417, Cowell's edition; Sabbasava Sutta, 10, 11, 12: *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi.

[3] *Life of Gaudama*, first ed., p. 321 note; Rangoon, 1866.

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now that the governing ideas of Deity and the separate existence of the soul were expelled from the human mind,—What was there left to give vitality and coherence to his system as a religion? A kind of religion is conceivable when something eternal and self-dependent is recognised, if not without and above a man, at least within him; but here is a religion vast and comprehensive springing from the determination to annihilate all religion, asserting not simply that man is independent of all superior beings, but that as the sum-total of groups of sensations, abstract ideas, tendencies, and potentialities, nothing of his personality can survive dissolution, and how are we to account for it?[1]

The answer is to be sought for in the working of that great moral instinct which is at the root of the belief in transmigration. Though there was no person, no soul to emigrate from the body, though the man perished, there was something which he called the Karma—a word coined by old Brahman sages long before him, though used by them in a different sense—that survived.[2] The aggregate of the good and evil in the life that had come to an end formed the seed of another exist-

[1] Max Müller, introd. to Buddagosha's Parables, p. xxx, ed. 1870.

[2] The first traces of this belief are found, it is said, in the Upanishads, Brihadâranyaka, iii. 2. 1, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xv. p. 126; Dhammapada, v. 1. 127, *ibid.* vol. x. Part i. 3. 35.

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ence, so that each new individual and generation became the exact and inevitable results of those that had preceded them. It was evidently a theory of continuity as unscientific as it was unphilosophic. It could not be called an evolution in any sense of the word, seeing it meant the appearance in a new individual of the mental and physical acts of another who had ceased to be. The assertion, again, that though there was no "continuing consciousness," no transience of soul in any sense from one person to the other, the two persons are one, has been very properly stigmatised as a "psychological absurdity."[1] From the first, though one of their stablest dogmas, this one was a difficulty to the Buddhists themselves. Their learned men never professed to justify it to reason, but accepted it as a mystery, in open contradiction to their principle that everything was to be rejected which could not be comprehended or explained. The common people again simply ignored it, and adhered to the belief of their fathers in continuity of life and personal identity for man in the future. The sages might refine, but the moral sense of the masses could not escape from the conviction that the evil which they had done must follow them, and the good which they

[1] Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, p. 94; also his *Manual of Buddhism*, pp. 100, 106.

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would do could not be interred with their bones. Even the speculation of the sages was a telling confirmation of the truth that man cannot get rid of himself. He may make a mock at God, may demand, If a man die can he live again? or how differs the life of a man from the life of a beast? but he cannot refine away his moral sense and the instinct of retribution which is inwoven in his inmost being. Buddha acknowledged no moral government of Deity, discarded the old belief that the same soul must receive the reward of the deeds done in the body; he denied even to the soul a separate existence from the perishable body; but he was haunted by the ghost of personal identity. He felt absolutely certain that there was a real connection of cause and effect between past and present and future, and that each act of the soul must work out its full effect to the bitter end.[1] So it was only by profession that God was mocked; men were witnesses to themselves of a Sovereign Power forcing Himself upon them, even when they tried to forsake Him, compelling them

[1] "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought (or polluted mind), suffering follows him as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the wain" (Dhammapada, 1). "Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, not if we enter the cleft of the mountains, is there known a spot in the whole world where a man might be freed from an evil deed" (Dhammapada, 127; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x.).

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to receive His thoughts when they would not think for themselves. So in primitive Buddhism we have the strange paradox that out of Atheism there arose a religion, with a demand upon conscience almost Christian, and asserting as Christianity does the eternal necessity of righteousness and truth.[1]

The analogy which has been suggested between the Buddhist dogma of Karma and the Christian doctrine of heredity is a very interesting one. It is strange that the law of heredity, so clearly indicated in the Bible, should be proclaimed in our age as a modern discovery. Infidelity formerly denounced the Bible for teaching that sin and its penalty were transmitted from generation to generation, forgetting that but for transgression the law of heredity could only and always entail good. Laws are to be judged by their intention, and this one, designed to secure and transmit the increment of good in each generation, is manifestly perverted by conditions for which it is not responsible. The law, however, which asserts itself in humanity by entailing on the generations the blessing of good as well as the curse of evil, is now being proclaimed and interpreted, not by divines, but by men of science and philosophy. The twin truth of the unity of humanity, elemental in the Hebrew and Christian religions, though

[1] "L'athéisme devenu religion et recouvert du manteau des vertus chrétiennes."—Wassilief, *Buddhism*, introd. by E. Laboulaye, p. viii.

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formerly strangely forgotten or denounced by infidelity, is also adopted as a professed discovery of our century. We are all agreed that humanity is one, that each life is part of a larger life, and so the injury of the part is the injury of the whole. Sin could not enter humanity without dragging it down, and holiness could not enter and conquer without lifting it up. If one could appear in humanity without sin, not a link in the diseased chain, but perfectly free from all taint of disease, is the supposition incredible that he would have the effect upon humanity of a new creation? His coming would imply the reversal of the drift toward evil and the weakening of the inherited and accumulated tendency to depravity. It would be a bringing under Divine influence of this mysterious principle of heredity, with results for good which no human intellect can measure, and establish a once greatly derided assertion, that as in one Adam, that is, one kind of humanity, all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Buddha had a clear apprehension of the truth of heredity, but he had not the faintest conception of the unity of humanity. His theory of life was essentially atomic. Humanity was not to him one whole, but a congeries of individuals, each one an end to himself, and living just to himself. The injury done to self by wrong-doing was always

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present to a Buddhist's thought, but the suffering thus caused to others was never taken into account. He had no idea of the whole suffering in the one, and consequently no sense of duty to mankind. Though believing in the propagative power of good and evil, he did not work for the good of coming generations, but solely for the rescue of the individual from the whirlpool of suffering existence. It has been charitably suggested that his aim finds its analogue in the offset to personal extinction so winningly presented by "George Eliot" and Mr. John Morley, whereby though dead and gone for ever in ourselves, we may "live again in minds made better by our presence," and "in pulses stirred to generosity."[1] Buddhism had no such hope; the age, the system itself, were alike incapable of conceiving it. The time for that kind of Positivism had not come. The human mind had to undergo long centuries of Christian culture before it was possible for the nineteenth-century agnostic poetess and philosopher thus to expound their creed, for modern Positivism has been powerfully though indirectly influenced by the faith which it contradicts, and, like many of the assailants of Christianity, it owes to it the most of its strength and the best of its weapons.

Christianity, starting from the conception of man as no outgrowth of nature, but a new creation

[1] Professor Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, p. 171.

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in it, a being within and distinct from his body as the driver is from the chariot,[1] has a theory of human destiny contrasted utterly with that of Buddhism. Man's teeth have been set on edge because his fathers have eaten a sour grape, but the brand of pain upon past transgressions helps him to conquer the taint transmitted in the blood. Though he finds heavy temptation in inherited tendencies, he finds in every temptation a way of escape in a call to yield to other tendencies which are ever drawing his soul to goodness. Sharing a confessedly sinful humanity, he may be partaker of a sinless one, and thus, if evil reigns over him unto death, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus can free him from it.

Buddhism had no such hope and goal for man; indeed, we may well wonder that a pessimism more thorough than that of Brahmanism did not deprive it of all hope and sink it into fatalism. Left alone to fight his way through the universe, struggling in a maelstrom of forces with no help for him in man, no hope of sympathy in God, a Buddhist would surely despair. On the contrary, unlike the Moslem cowering under the thought of relentless will, he accepted the situation with Christian

[1] Nagasēna's figure used in controverting the idea of the separate existence of the soul.—Milindapanha, p. 25, quoted by Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 254; Hardy, *Manual*, p. 425; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 96.

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determination to improve it.[1] He could hope for deliverance, for suffering had an origin, and if the cause could be removed then suffering would end. The coils of misery could be unwound, the curse of humanity could be abolished, if only man could procure for himself emancipation from the necessity of Karma. Now this the true Buddhist believed he could gain by the extinction of all desire. Plato adopting the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration, taught that the future organism of the soul would depend upon the cravings which it had fostered here.[2] Somewhat similarly Christians believe that the future of the man will depend upon his most dominant present habits, and that, disembodied, the spirit will gravitate unerringly to the society which it has made of its kind. Buddhism, believing in no soul, maintained that in the dying creature a particular thirst or cleaving to existence caused the birth of another creature; and so he who would escape from the chain of existence must endeavour, by vigorous prosecution of the eightfold way, and the four paths or degrees of perfection to which it led, to attain a state in which all craving for continuity had ceased. Karma then would have no terror to him; he would have reached a point whence he could look onwards without anxiety, because he would be treading a path from which he

[1] Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, 221. [2] *Phaedo*, Jowett's Introd., i. 407, ed. 1875.

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never would stray. He might still be a man, liable to suffering and subject to death, but one purified and emancipated from all inheritance of evil, and fully assured of Nirvana.

And what was Nirvana, the final refuge of the emancipated Buddhist? Ever since the religion was known in Europe great diversity of opinion has prevailed as to the meaning of this word. It was employed by the Brahmans many centuries before Buddha's day, and used by them and by himself and his disciples in so great a variety of senses that even the learned Rajendralala Mitra, in enumerating the sects into which orthodox Buddhists are divided in regard to it, confessed some years ago that he had given up in despair the attempt to ascertain its meaning.[1] The researches and discoveries of later years have enabled the translators of the texts to write with less hesitation as to its significance, and we are entitled to accept as solid the results of their patient investigations. To begin with, they tell us that it means the peace which ensues when all passion has been subdued, and all selfish craving has been extinguished. Though practically no Buddhist hopes to attain to it here, but only to enter the paths leading to it, it may be reached, not in anticipation only, but in fruition.[2] Buddha may

[1] Preface to English translation of the Lalita Vistara; Calcutta.

[2] Sutta Nipâta; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. pp. 33, 80.

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be said to have been in Nirvana forty years, for he entered it, not in the moment of dying, but when he attained perfection. This first conception of it, therefore, seems a marvellous anticipation of the faith of the Christian, who finds his heaven and enters into his rest when he is delivered from the *φρόνημα τῆς σάρκος*, from all selfish clutching at the means of existence. In both religions, taken at their highest, the goal of aspiration was not extinction of sorrow, but extinction of self-love: in Buddhism the quenching of *trishna*, or *upádána*, "thirst," in Christianity the quenching of *ἐπιθυμία*, "lust," "inordinate desire." In both religions the goal meant finality, a state in which there was an end of death; and in both, moreover, it meant a change which no language could define, and to which no known standard could apply. The Christian believer tells us that he is passing from the visible to the invisible, from the temporal to the eternal, and in like manner the Buddhist Arahat would only be able to allude to the great change by negations, and as the very opposite of all we know or at present conceive. The Christian believes in the perseverance of the saints, and the Buddhist who has really entered the path must sooner or later reach his prize.

But there the analogies end, while the contrasts between the two beliefs are as irreconcilable as are

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their postulates. The postulates of Christianity are the spiritual nature of man, and that his present evil condition is not his normal one. Sin has gone extensively and deeply into his being, for it is no mere superficial excrescence, a fault which can be corrected, a smirch that can be washed away, but a leprosy in the blood, which is the life. Cleansing is required and provided, but it is the cleansing out of the whole corrupt nature by the transfusion into the soul of a Divine life so pure, and so strong because of purity, that it could not be holden of death. Life is the essential idea of Christian salvation; it is the Divine gift bestowed by Christ, who came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. So while in the body we groan, being burdened by a suffering flesh, it is not that we may be unclothed, but clothed upon; not that the gift of life may be recalled, but that it may be secured in its completeness. It is "more life and fuller that we want." Sanctification in the Christian conception means a process of healing, and salvation means perfect health—the condition of a creature freed from all inordinate desire, or desire for anything forbidden, which is the root of all sin, and rejoicing in the untainted bliss of being. Deathless, sinless life, the life of eternal incorruption, "the perfect life of love, the rest of immortality," that is the Christian Nirvana.

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Buddhism, on the contrary, postulating the material nature of all existence controlled by the universal law of transmigration, had no such conception of final blessedness. Nirvana in its thought meant, indeed, extinction in the first instance of all fleshly and selfish dispositions; but the thirst, the "cleaving" (*tanhā*) which was to be quenched, was not lust in the Christian sense, but the natural innocent love of life, and Nirvana involved the extinction of that love, and of life as the going out of a flame which had nothing else to feed upon. Deliverance from this instinctive thirst for life is a specific germ of which annihilation is the outcome. That Buddha so expounded it was long questioned, and by many denied, but Dr. Oldenberg has sufficiently made clear his attitude toward this dogma. He seems to have contented himself with its first significance, to have evaded the necessity of deciding the many discussions which were waged concerning the second as profitless, and not tending to quietude and wisdom, and to have exhorted his disciples to strive rather to enter the paths.[1] By the time, however, the canonical books were produced, his disciples had not shrunk from pushing his fundamental principles to their only logical conclusion. The most ancient expositions of his doctrine disclose one long theory of Nihilism as its only legitimate

[1] *Buddha, etc.*, pp. 274-284; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 111-123.

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inference. If misery was inseparable from existence, it followed that non-existence was a blessing, and consequently man's chief end was to aspire and strive to reach that state in which the "very seed of existence has withered, the lamp of life has burnt out for ever, and man can no more be born again."[1]

While this was the doctrine of the philosophers, the overwhelming majority of Buddhists in every age and country have put a very different meaning upon the word. Just as human nature has proved too strong in them to accept their atheistic creed, so in popular estimation from the first, Nirvana has meant not annihilation of existence, but extinction of suffering. They did not comprehend its metaphysical significance, but they longed, as all men do, for release from sorrow, and a happier life when this is over, and they took refuge in Buddha, because his law promised to convey them over the troubles of life into a blessed hereafter. There might be higher things for the wise to gain, but the simple were contented with this inferior portion, and indeed they chose the better part. For surely the conception of deliverance from suffering, involving extinction of the being that suffers, was as childish as that of getting rid of a toothache by cutting off the head.[2] Rightly were they led by the infallible

[1] Childers, *Pali Dictionary*, Art. NIRVANA.

[2] Dr. Kellogg, in his *Light of Asia and Light of the World*, pp. 223,

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instincts of our moral being to believe that the end of righteousness must be rest, but they wandered fearfully in conceiving of rest as nothingness, for the "end of righteousness is peace, and the fruit of peace, quietness and assurance for ever."[1]

The great question with Buddha and his immediate disciples was not how Nirvana, the goal of human aspiration, was to be defined, but how it was to be attained. It was for him sufficiently expressed as the final extinction of all the roots of sorrow, and he taught that this consummation could only be reached by knowledge. Ignorance was the ultimate ground of all suffering existence, but, as in Christianity, men could know the truth, and the truth would set them free. According to both religions, this knowledge could neither be transmitted by tradition nor learned by a simple intellectual process. It implied a moral and spiritual training, and was the fruit of obedience; but there again the analogy ends, for the Buddhist's idea of knowledge is as widely contrasted with the Christian idea as is its idea of the Truth to be known. In Christianity knowledge means Divine

252, protests very forcibly against the use by translators of the word "immortality" as the equivalent of Nirvana. It meant, as he reminds us, "the end of death indeed, but not because life had triumphed, but because, life having ceased, death had nothing to feed on." Immortality, endless bliss, and kindred phrases, applied to it, are only justifiable by the popular but really un-Buddhistic use of the word Nirvana.

[1] Isaiah xxxii. 11; James iii. 18.

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illumination or revelation, the result of trustful surrender to Christ, the revealer of the Father, and Himself the Truth. In Buddhism it meant a knowledge gained by man himself, through a process of moral culture and self-control.[1] In Christianity it was a grace that came through obedience to a better Will; in Buddhism it meant simply obedience to a Law. That law, moreover, had no commanding power to enforce it, and involved no moral obligation in the Christian sense to obey it. It was not a law like the law of Moses or the law of Christ, for it implied no Lawgiver to make it binding. It was simply a rule, a method, discovered by man, and followed because he found it expedient to follow it. Adopting this method, observing this rule, persevering in this course, a man would attain to knowledge of the truth of things, but this supposed truth is the very contradiction of the truth as it is in Jesus, the truth by which we are sanctified, and made wise unto salvation.[2]

This should be borne in mind when in translations of Buddhist books we find such words as "holiness," "saints," "paths or degrees of sanctification," "righteousness," and such like. The original

[1] Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, pp. 97, 223.

[2] "Not to know suffering, not to know the cause of suffering, not to know the path that leads to the cessation of suffering—this is called Ignorance." Consequently knowledge of these things is saving knowledge.—Mahavagga, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii. p. 75, note 2.

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words represent conceptions different from and antagonistic to those suggested by these words to us. But keeping this in view, we may well admire and be thankful for the high purpose and clear moral insight which enabled Buddha to discover and set forth his way to Nirvana. The strength and glory of Buddhism, the secret of its original attractiveness, and of its long continuance, is its ethical system. Its metaphysical creed may represent a very puerile philosophy, its discipline of artificial restraint may have been the reverse of emancipation, but its moral code, in its simple and direct and powerful appeal to the conscience, is a far nearer approach to the Gospel than that of Gentile Stoics or of Jewish Scribes. Avoiding sensuality on the one hand as degrading, and asceticism on the other as unprofitable, it mapped out a *via media* that led far above that projected by any ancient school. It entered into every domain of life, of thought and word and deed;[1] laid its control, as Christianity does, on feeling and motive, and proclaimed that the way to perfect peace was a way which no unrighteous man could enter and no unclean man could tread.

[1] This threefold division or "doorway" (Hardy, *Manual*, p. 491), once considered by Weber to be peculiar to Buddhism, has been proved to be common to Brahmans, Persians, Jews, and Greeks, as well as Christians. See interesting note at pp. 28, 29, of vol. x. of *Sacred Books of the East*, Part i.

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It is very interesting to catch, behind all its superstitions and idolatries, and crude and childish speculations, this glimpse of an ideal like unto that of the Son of Man, calling and leading men to righteousness, purity, and kindness, as their only refuge. To the old Vedic religion, and to all the class of religions of which it is the type, morality, as we have seen, was a stranger. It was the philosopher, and not the priest, who in old times argued of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. The Hebrew, as we have seen, was the first and only ancient religion that demanded holiness of life as indispensable to the worship of God, and Christianity, as was natural, recognised this old law which men had from the beginning. But Buddhism was the first system in which morality was substituted for religion. It had neither priests, nor temples, nor prayers, but taught men to depend for safety solely upon a life of virtue and wisdom and goodness. Though it implied a change of heart amounting to conversion, this was due to the operation of no regenerating spirit, but to perseverance in courses within the reach of any one. Anticipating, therefore, theories of life broached now-a-days as if they were new discoveries, its endeavour to dissociate the human from the supernatural, and to substitute the ethical for the religious, deserves very earnest study.

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It meant man's earnest resolve to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, for there is no God within him working both to will and to do of His good pleasure. It was an attempt to conceive of a morally governed universe without a Governor. Professedly atheistic compared with the religion out of which it arose, it has been properly described to be "more theistic at its core than Brahmanism has ever been."[1] It did not trouble itself about the origin of man as an emanation from the universal self, but it asserted the dignity of his nature as resting on really a sounder basis. It refused to believe with the Hebrew that the Creator had written the law on the tables of the heart, but it found the law there written somehow, and read it almost as correctly. Like the Christian apostle, its founder asserted that each man was a law unto himself, the judge of his own action, and the arbiter of his fate. And thus it came to pass that, without any conscious purpose of doing so, he inaugurated a moral revolution which lasted for ages. It swept away an enormous mass of superstitions from the Indian mind for centuries, abolished many abuses, and modified more which it failed to overcome. It has tended to civilise many barbarous races; and if among them Buddhism has been able to bear the encumbrance of their hideous idolatries which it

[1] Dr. Fairbairn, *Studies in Religion and Philosophy*, p. 161.

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assumed, it is because of the strong ethical foundation upon which it rests. It is the ethical element in religion that is universal and enduring, and there is a completeness and force and persuasiveness of ethical teaching in Buddhism which all non-Christian religions lack; there is a comprehensiveness of duty and gentleness which pre-intimate clearly that universal Christian rule which makes it imperative that we should not only duly consider all brethren who are human, but should say to the worm, as within the scope of our benevolence, "Thou art my mother and sister."

Let us now examine more closely this way to Nirvana as expounded in the Suttas of Buddha, and in relation to Christ's way of salvation. The Christian is very simple, but as it proceeds from a much deeper conception of human need, its method of meeting it is very different. It was not the suffering and misdirection of men that most deeply impressed and most powerfully affected our Lord. He came to a race made in the image of God, that had confessedly fallen from or had failed to realise its ideal. It was lost, as sheep are lost, by inherent tendency to wander; as coins are lost, by the neglect of others; as prodigals are lost, by sensuality; and as Pharisees are lost, by self-righteousness. It was diseased and perishing, struggling not in the coils of changeful suffering, but in the clutch of an evil power which

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had taken possession of it. Sorely needing, though not seeking redemption, unable to help itself, He had come in the name of His Father, who willed not that any should perish, to seek and save it. His formula of salvation was plain enough for even babes to apprehend, for all He asked was that men should turn to and believe in Him. They could not raise themselves, but they could look toward Him, and find deliverance in the look, for by trust in Him as the supreme object of love and worship, they would be lifted up out of their evil state. The deepest tides of man's being are those which are swayed by his faith in and love of persons, and it was upon faith, the commonest of all powers in our nature, that Christ relied for the deliverance of mankind from the dominion of evil. He offered Himself to man and for man, was lifted up for them on the cross in the beauty of suffering holiness; and as love always attracts love, and as goodness becomes a creative power in those who appreciate it, so all who believed Him, trusted Him, clung to Him as the weak cling to the strong, were uplifted, and changed, and transfigured. Love not only has a dominating but an assimilating power. We become like those whom we fervently admire and implicitly obey. Obedience in such a case is not an obligation, but an inspiration; so though in Christianity we speak of the Law of Christ, it is

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not as an external code to which we must conform; but as a power communicated to and operative in us. It is a law of the *spirit of life*, a grace and blessedness of disposition, which, springing from gratitude, will manifest itself in holiness far exceeding the righteousness of a law, because vivified by a charity and mercy as boundless as that which it adores.

So when our Lord inaugurated His kingdom, He may be said to have proclaimed in the Beatitudes His Law, for He then declared the dispositions of those who would receive Him, and who as sons of men trusting and following Him, would be saved and sanctified and glorified by the Son of God. Now, though from his first sermon to the last Buddha is represented as "instructing his disciples, inciting them, rousing them, and gladdening them" by discoursing of blessedness, it was not of blessedness in the gospel sense. It was the blessedness of the Old Covenant, not of the New—the blessedness, not of them who love much because they have been forgiven much, but of them who keep the law, and tread "the path which opens the eyes, bestows understanding, leads to peace of mind and full enlightenment"—the blessedness all who, walking in the Noble Eightfold Way, must eventually reach Nirvana.[1]

It is almost impossible to explain all that is

[1] Dhamma. Sutta, 2-4; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. pp. 146, 147; Mahavagga, i. 6. 17-20; *ibid.* vol. xiii. pp. 94, 95.

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meant by the Noble Eightfold Way, for translators differ very greatly as to the real meaning of the terms employed, and even when they agree, they warn us that the words, though similar to our own, do not suggest the same realities. The word "righteousness" and even "morality" never can have on the lips of a true Buddhist the same signification which they have on ours; for righteousness, apart from the fear and love of God, is an impossible conception to us, and so would unrighteousness, unless as a sin or an offence against Him. Buddhism has no word for 'sin' in our sense, and therefore no words for 'holiness' or 'saint.' "Sin is simply pain, demerit, and a saint is one freed from what causes pain." "A righteous act is one accumulating merit, an unrighteous act one producing suffering."[1] The Eightfold Way, interpreted by the legends, presents us with the Buddhist conception of the perfect man, and were we to take its constituents as equivalents to the Christian qualities suggested by the words, we should find outlined a character which here or anywhere must be its own beatitude, but whose blessedness is as completely beyond the reach of sinful man as flying is beyond the power of a bird whose pinions are broken.

But Right Views or Belief, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Work, Right Livelihood, Right Exer-

[1] Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 124.

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cise, Right Mindfulness, and Right Tranquillity, must be taken, not as we accept, but as Buddhists understand, the phrases. By right belief they unquestionably meant belief in Buddha and the Four Verities; right resolve included abandonment of all domestic and social duties; right speech was the recitation or publication of the dharma; right work was specially that of a monk; right livelihood that of living on alms; right exercise tended to the suppression of all individuality; right mindfulness was habitual contemplation upon the impurity and impermanence of human nature; and right tranquillity was ecstasy.[1] To have substituted even this in the Hindu mind for a righteousness only ceremonial and superstitious was indeed reformation; but as an idea of Perfection it is manifestly not only different from, but greatly inferior to, the Christian ideal. Perfection in the case of Buddhism meant extinction of feeling and consciousness; in Christianity it meant harmonious and full development of being and character. In Christianity perfection meant conformity to an Exemplar outside and above it, the likeness of a child to a Father in heaven; but Buddhism could conceive of no exemplar, and the man who would be perfect must strive in entire self-dependence to

[1] Frankfurter, App. to Wordsworth's Bampton Lectures on *The One Religion*, p. 348; Sutta Nipâta, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. p. 69.

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be so. In Buddhism the standard is purely human; in Christianity, while the measure required is relative, the standard is divine. So in Buddhism the Arhat is content, and we never hear from him the confession, "I count not myself to have attained!" but in Christianity the more saintly the life, the greater the discontent with it. The higher we rise the more urgent is the desire to press on. Christianity therefore opens up the avenue to perpetual improvement, and inspiring us with a motive to progress which can never lose its power, it provides for the soul the only rest that will satisfy it. "In life," says Pascal, "we are ever believing, we seek repose, but what we really crave is agitation." "It is the contest that pleases us, and not the victory; the pursuit and not the possession."[1] Absolute truth and goodness is the perfection of divine blessedness; the never-ceasing pursuit of it is human blessedness. The goal we can never reach, but the watchword, "Nearer, my God, to Thee!" seems to solve for us the problem of human destiny, for by directing us to the life of perpetual achievement, it assures us of a never-ending blessedness.

The Buddhist goal of perfection and the law or way that led to it, was by Buddha himself or his earliest disciples considered to be beyond the power of many to attain to. His followers were soon

[1] *Pensées*, vol. ii. p. 34; vol. i. p. 205; ed. Faugère.

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ranged into classes according to their ability to tread the paths which led to liberty. His law, therefore, unlike the Ten Commandments of the Bible, which are binding on all without distinction, was not a law for all men. Each one was at liberty to take on him as many or as few obligations as he pleased, according to his resolve to continue in the world, or to abandon it, and having abandoned it according to his resolve to seek after Arhatship and aspire to Nirvana.[1] Upon those who, conforming outwardly, yet remained in their secular callings, was enjoined abstinence from the five gross sins, of killing, theft, adultery, falsehood, taking intoxicating drinks—already, with the exception of the last, made binding on them by the Hindu religion. By refraining from these, and by serving and maintaining the monks, even the laity could win for themselves a happy re-birth into some world hereafter. Those wiser ones, again,[2] who, convinced of the evil and danger of secular life, had abandoned their homes, and entered the Order that by meditation and abstraction they might further work out their deliverance, bound themselves, in addition to observance of these five commands, to eat only at stated times, to use neither perfume nor ornament, to sleep only on mats on

[1] Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 506.

[2] Sutta Nipâta, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. pp. 33, 46, 67 Dhammapada, 284.

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the ground, to abstain from dancing, music, and worldly shows, to own and accept neither silver nor gold, and to be perfectly chaste. For those wisest of all, who had not only abandoned the world in order to lead the better life of the religious, but who had strenuously resolved, in following the religious life, to attain to Arhatship and Nirvana, there remained the much more severe observance of what was called the "Seven Jewels of the Law,"[1] the last and most important use to which the Noble Eightfold Way could be put. For by earnestly struggling, meditating, mastering their precepts, the "Ten Fetters" of Delusion, Doubt, Dependence on Ceremonial Rites, Sensuality, Hatred, Love of life on Earth, Craving for life in Heaven, Pride, Self-Righteousness, and Ignorance, would one by one be broken, and long self-abnegation involved in the process would work out its full reward.

It is to be observed that in all these classes or stages the practice of virtue and the cultivation of purity were considered fundamental. In the preaching ascribed to Buddha great stress is laid on Enlightenment, and on Meditation, which leads to it; but at the base of all this system, as the first indispensable factor in securing perfection, was Uprightness. In the Suttas this formula constantly recurs: "Great is the advantage, great the fruit of earnest

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. pp. 60, 61.

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contemplation when set round with upright conduct. Great is the fruit, great the advantage of intelligence when set round with earnest contemplation. The mind set round with intelligence is free from the greatest evils, that is to say, from sensuality, from individuality, from delusion, and from ignorance." Again, "Righteousness, earnest thought, wisdom and freedom sublime: these are the truths realised by Gotama far-renowned."[1] The uprightness, or righteousness required, presents, as the Moral Law of Scripture does, a much broader range of influence than the words would indicate. In prohibiting lying, Buddha enjoined avoidance of all offensive language, and of every word that could sever men. He also instructed his disciples not only to avoid showing enmity to those who hated them, but to overcome evil with good. Purity again in his regard meant purity not of word and deed alone, but of thought and feeling. In some respects his precepts go beyond the Moral Law. The command not to kill included respect not for human beings only, but for every creature that had life. He not only condemned drunkenness, but demanded total abstinence as essential. The precept "Do not commit adultery" was understood in our sense of it only by the laity; for the religious, marriage was not an honourable estate, but one polluted and polluting.

[1] Mahâparanibhâna Sutta, cap. iv. 4; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi.

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Unlike the Moral Law, which recognises everything that is natural and sanctifies it, the rule of Buddha in these respects was unnatural in its restrictions. It pronounced common and unclean what God Himself has cleansed; and, as always happens when men add to the commandments of God in one direction, they are sure to take away from them in another. So Buddha's rule, though excellent in that it lays its control not on conduct only, but on thought and feeling, is essentially negative and defective. It does not cover man's whole nature, nor provide for his every possible relation. Ignoring God, it is therefore interpreted by no positive and active principle of goodness. It is inspired by no sense of duty, for it recognises in the universe no superior to whom anything is due, and, unconscious of any benefit, it owns no gratitude. Consequently unrighteousness, as an offence to or an outrage upon a better or kinder being than self, is not in all its range of view. Unrighteousness is only a calamity to be avoided or an imprudence not to be repeated. Struggling to get out of the meshes of an evil net, the Buddhist might bewail his mistake, his folly, or his feeble or ill-directed effort, but he was totally unconscious of rebellion or ingratitude.[1]

Moreover, in a universe where Moi-même is the only god, and a man's own Nirvana his only goal,

[1] Saint-Hilaire, *Le Bouddha, etc.*, pp. 149, 153, 161.

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the primary motive of action can rise no higher than fear or self-interest. Apparently strong, it is really essentially weak in regard to the maintenance of proper relations to others demanded by the second table of the Moral Law. The suffering caused to others through his failure to fulfil the law, or by conscious transgression of it, makes no impression on the Buddhist, except in as far as it interferes with his pursuit of perfection. Others are regarded only as occasions of acquiring merit. Instead of serving them as Christ enjoins us to do, the Buddhist serves himself of them. It is a religion of every man for himself. It has been likened to Positivism, but it falls far short of it, as lacking the altruism which Positivism has borrowed from Christianity.[1] Positivism refuses to do anything for the glory of God, but it lays great stress upon the duty of living for humanity. It makes the great mistake of supposing that the claims of God must be distinct from or antagonistic to the interests of humanity. It does not recognise that they are identical—that the more the life is reserved for God, the more of it is communicated to our fellow-men, and that he must love the Lord our God with all our hearts, before we can love our neighbour as ourselves. The Positivist scheme of morals, however, is vastly superior to that of Buddhism, for in

[1] Wordsworth, Bampton Lectures on *The One Religion*, p. 91.

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it the goal is Nirvana, without any reference to the good of any other, and the decided advantage of any action consists wholly and solely in the consequences to the actor himself.

Dr. Oldenberg has pointed out to us that the much-vaunted charity of Buddhism, illustrated in the legends by the self-immolation of Buddha to satisfy the hunger of a wild beast, though it "sways toward does not even touch the law of Christian charity."[1] Buddha's Rule, though benevolent to the extent that it would harm no one, and beneficent in respect of doing good, knew nothing of Christianity's enthusiastic passionate desire to help and work for others.[2] It was the interest of the true Buddhist to forgive his enemies and not to hate them,[3] but he never considered himself bound to love them. It was good policy for one pressing on to Arhatship to do good works, and he would go far out of his way to do them; but he never went about doing good as one who found his reward in the opportunity and power to do it. He was among men not as one who ministers and gives his life to ransom others. His very self-abnegation had egoism at its core. Between the Christian sur-

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 289.

[2] Meta Sutta, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. p. 25.

[3] See the story given in Mahavagga, x. 2. 3-20; also the story of Kunala, Asoka's son—this latter said by Burnouf, in his Introduction, to be of modern origin. Quoted by Oldenberg, p. 290.

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render of self to God for the sake of others, and the Buddhist surrender to others for the sake of self, there is a great gulf fixed. The first springs from a sense of indebtedness, a consciousness of mercy unmerited, but freely bestowed; but the other, having no sense of forgiveness received, has no real mercy to show. The mercy of God is the spring of all true human compassion, for he who truly receives it finds it impossible to withhold it. It is, alas! bestowed upon many who are too full of themselves to take it in, and in all such cases it is lost, but in every heart that is conscious of it, it becomes a disposition to show kindness that cannot be counted by acts, and that never will ask, "How oft shall my brother offend me and I forgive him?" Buddhism was friendly in its benevolence, but it never was actively charitable, in taking upon it the infirmities and bearing the sicknesses of others. It has no passionate desire to gather the wrecked and blighted of humanity and to bind up their bleeding wounds and sores. On the contrary, in its pursuit of Nirvana it passed by all such in the path of life, precisely as the priest and Levite passed the wounded man on their way to Jericho. It not only was selfish, but even cruel in this pursuit, for a woman in difficulty or in distress was not to be helped by a passing monk. The poor and the diseased and the lost were not to be considered,

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for they were simply suffering the due reward of their deeds; but the yellow-robed monks, healthy and shining-faced, were to be the recipients of the bounty of the charitable and the proper objects of their attention. One of its beatitudes runs thus: "Not to serve the foolish, but to serve the wise; to honour those worthy of honour. This is the greatest blessing."[1] Almsgiving was indeed encouraged; but alms were only to be bestowed upon the worthy—on the monk and Arhat—not on the outcast and the leper, whose miserable condition indicated their unworthiness. If the animal creation profited by their charity, which they refused to their suffering fellow-men, it was from a selfish motive: for the parent, or wife, or child, whom by Buddha's rule they were obliged to help, might be looking at them, for all they knew, out of the eyes of the beast, and not to fulfil the precept would bring to themselves both harm and loss.[2] Tested even socially, therefore, the Rule of Buddha is defective, and this because it is not founded on religion. The cause of God is eternally the cause of man. In the Fatherhood of God is essentially involved the universal brotherhood of man. Christ is before us as the representative of humanity,

[1] So Dr. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 126. Fausböll translates, "Not cultivating the society of," etc. (Sutta Nipâta, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. pp. 43, 44.)

[2] Dr. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 204.

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because He is the representative of Deity. Refusal to acknowledge His supremacy will disturb all human relationships and throw them into disorder. We learn to do to others as Christ hath done to us; the sense of our indebtedness will be the measure of our charity. For this end He has chosen the poorest and the most wretched as His memorials, and He has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

To do justice to Buddha's way, however, we must remember that the path of uprightness (*sila*) was only the first part of it. Without external rectitude, inward integrity would be impossible; but external rectitude, without self-concentration, would be a foundation without a structure. "A man must endeavour to keep constant watch over his thoughts, for our whole existence depends upon our thinking,"[1] was one of the noble maxims of Buddhism. It is to its credit as a religion that it recognised that only a small part of our real life can be expressed in words and deeds, that the true sphere of morality and human temptation was within, and that it instructed men to keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Buddha seems to have felt, and to have in part at least expressed, the contrast and conflict

[1] Dhammapada, 157-8-9, 379-80; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i.

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between the seen and the unseen in our life. He recognised, it is true, no soul, and the warfare between the flesh and the spirit was not found in his philosophy, but he had to account for the antagonism which every one feels between our animality and our humanity, between what is pressing or dragging us down, and what in us struggles to be free. The mental and moral qualities were of far more value than the physical; the invisible was of more consequence, because more real, than the visible. The "mindful and thoughtful man" was the man who "looked within and not without," and so Buddha's insistence upon the "noble earnestness of meditation" as indispensable to deliverance is a grand testimony to the truth, which no philosophy of materialism can falsify, that we are far more concerned with what we think and feel and imagine than with what we touch and we taste, and that our thoughts and feelings go far more into the weaving of our character than do our words and works.

It is alleged that in Pali literature the word for meditation (*samadhi*), by which alone inner purity can be attained, bears to the word for "uprightness" the same relation as that which faith in the New Testament bears to works.[1] By upright-

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, in the Introduction to his translation of the Keto Khila Sutta (Barrenness and Bondage), *Sacred Books of the*

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ness, delusion is cleared away, and by pondering constantly the five principal kinds of meditations—Love, Pity, Joy, the Impurity of the Body, and the state of Serene Indifference to what men think bad or good—the man was supposed to be redeemed from all attachment.[1] It is very pathetic to note this approach toward and yet rebound from the Christian conception of the function of faith: for faith is the victory that overcometh the world, with its lust of the flesh, its lust of the eye, and its pride of life. It is that too which, because it looks to the unseen and eternal, quenches all sordid or inordinate cleaving to life, which is the root of so

East, vol. xi. p. 222, says that in reading it he was irresistibly reminded of 2 Peter i. 5-9. The barrenness referred to in the Sutta is lack of successful effort to be free from "the Ten Fetters" which bind man to existence, chief of which is hankering after immortality in any form, or without form. How contrasted is this to St. Peter's thought! "Give diligence to provide in your faith earnestness," that it may be an overcoming faith; but as faith without knowledge is superstition, and earnestness misdirected will do harm, provide in earnestness "knowledge"; and as knowledge ungoverned will degenerate into conceit, provide in it "temperance"; but temperance must be inspired with "patience," bent on God's glory, not personal gain; "godliness" thus attained, "brotherly kindness" will manifest itself, and then "charity" toward every creature—that is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *summum bonum*, the knowledge in which we are neither to be barren nor unfruitful. No more forcible illustration of the utter contradiction between the two religions could be found than this verbal analogy of "barrenness and bondage."

[1] Compare St. Paul, Phil. iv. 8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are gracious; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

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much evil and the cause of so much suffering. The apostles, instructed of Christ, have taught us that God's precious gift of life is ours to use: that to keep it, to will to save and to find it, as if it were an end and not a means, is to miss and to lose it; while to use it, be willing to lose it for some higher good, is to keep it unto life eternal. Now Buddha had a glimpse of this truth, that lust of existence was the root of bitterness in humanity. He condemned as heresies the worldly lust which says, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," and the lust of other-worldliness which dreams that the life beyond will yield as good, or better pleasures than this one;[1] but the two last of his five principal meditations show how far apart and far short of the victory of faith was his idea of the victory of samadhi. The apostles' aim was to get rid of lust; but his aim was to get rid of life. The apostles mortified the members which are upon the earth, anger, wrath, malice, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, just that the higher life, the life hid with Christ in God, might grow and brighten; but Buddha, in "cleansing himself from all impurity, little by little, moment by moment, piece by piece,"[2] sought to escape from the last shadow of

[1] Dhamma-Kakka-ppavattana Sutta, 6, note; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. p. 148.

[2] Dhammapada, 239; *ibid.* vol. x. p. 1.

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personal existence into the blessedness of absolute unconsciousness, if not of utter extinction.

For this seems clearly revealed in the last or highest stage to which the paths of uprightness and meditation were supposed to conduct, that of enlightenment (*panna*) or spiritual abstraction, alleged to be equivalent to prayer in other religions. The highest Christian conception of prayer is that of communion with God; the highest Buddhist conception of *panna* is of a state of clairvoyance or ecstatic insight in which "men hear with clear and heavenly ear, surpassing that of men," and "comprehend by their own hearts the hearts of other men," and "recall their own various states in former existences," and "see with pure and heavenly vision the procession of other beings as they pass from life to life."[1] Buddha evidently was believed by his disciples to have possessed this power, and probably his own long fasting and severe austerities, practised in the beginning of his career, acting upon a highly nervous system, made him a believer in the reality of this perfect insight and ecstasy of contemplation, and that it might be acquired by all who were sufficiently persevering in pursuit of Arhatship.[2] It must be observed, however, that

[1] Akankheya Sutta; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. p. 210.

[2] If the legends are to be followed, he believed in the miraculous power which resulted from it (see Mahâparanibhâna Sutta, i. 33, and iii. 22; also Mahavagga, i. 20. 24), but he condemned the

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he does not appear to have regarded this as an experience to be enjoyed by the Arhat in perpetuity; on the contrary, it was the condition preceding final and eternal deliverance, and so it may be taken as the Buddhist conception of Euthanasia.

The Christian in the highest and supreme moment of life aspires, if conscious, after the beatific vision. It is no Brahmanic absorption into the absolute that he desires, but likeness to and communion with God. The consciousness of personality was never more intense, the conviction was never stronger that he has been divinely created and trained as a separate character. By long and prayerful use of the means of grace he has sought to bring, and to keep himself under the control of the Holy Spirit; and he hopes that the next change will completely free him from every trace of "sensuality, delusion, and ignorance," and purge away from the soul the last taint of selfishness. By long and sore experiences he has learned that selfishness is the evil root whence spring all the suffering and sorrow that poison life. He can therefore understand and sympathise with the Buddhist anathema upon "individuality," if by that is meant the

exercise of that power for self-glorification or for paltry gain (Kullavagga, v. 8. 2; also vii. 1, 2, 3; *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. xi. xii. xiii.).

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endeavour to abstract our life from the solidarity of humanity, to use it for our own ends, and to grudge what of it God uses for the rest of His family. This is the Christian conception of the cause of death and all its woe, and from this a Christian saint ever prays and struggles to be free; but it is not from "individuality" in this sense that the Buddhist Arhat seeks deliverance. He is bent upon the very thing from which the Christian is anxious to escape. He wants to isolate and withdraw his portion of life from the sum of humanity, to abstract himself from the mass, to save his own soul; and now that he nears the goal, his whole energies are directed, not to purify and strengthen and ennoble the personal self for better service, by minding what is pure and lovely, and by striving unceasingly after what is right and true, but by crushing out every feeling into apathy, every thought into vacuity, so as to get rid of personality, identity, and the very faintest germ of life.[1]

And this is the goal of a race that has extended not only over the whole range of the present, but over that of many existences; this is the victory which crowns a fight that has continued throughout untold ages. Truly there is something very pathetic in the conception of a struggle after saint-

[1] See Gough, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp. 267, 268.

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hood so prolonged, by one who, now a god, now an animal, now a man, has never lost sight of his mark, and has ever pressed onwards to it.[1] Probably we may have something to learn from it, by way of correcting the idea that true moral and spiritual excellence, perfection, saintliness, is the growth of a single life; but when the goal is understood in its bare reality, as implying not destruction of selfishness, but extinction of being, surely the reproachful question is justified, "To what purpose is this waste?" After millennia of transformation the nebula has formed into a star, and just at the point when it can illumine an immensity, it disappears for ever from the firmament. Unreckonable energy and thought have been expended upon the production of a man, and just when he has reached the highest point of perfection, and is most serviceable to the universe, he becomes of less value than a vapour that vanishes away. Truly

> "the crown of our life as it closes
> Is darkness; the fruit thereof dust,"

and man walketh in a vain show, he disquieteth himself in vain, if Buddha's way be the only path of deliverance from evil, and Nirvana his only goal.

And so while we ought to be profoundly thankful for the intellectual culture and moral earnest-

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 314.

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ness that made Buddha, in spite of himself, the reformer of Eastern Asia, it is manifest that even his best doctrines represent very partial and one-sided truths, "dwelt upon with morbid intensity, to the exclusion of every fact which might have modified them."[1] His fundamental error was his wild attempt to explain the life of man independently of Divine control, and to guide man safely through the perils and temptations of existence by an ethical system founded on no appeal to an eternal principle of goodness without, but solely to self-interest. The result, which has been to identify the nature of man with that of the animals,[2] surely shows conclusively that religion and morality can never be dissociated without damage to both. A religion without morality must degrade. A system of morality apart from religion will never upraise. Religion is for man simply indispensable. Deity is a necessity to him, and deity he must have, though he finds his god in a tree or makes it out of a stone. Man lives by faith, faith in his higher self, faith in a higher than himself, who alone can explain the conflict between his actual condition and the ideals which he conceives. The modern Buddhist assumes that "religion is the science of

[1] Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 35.
[2] Saint-Hilaire, *Le Bouddha, etc.*, p. 162.

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man, not the revelation of God, and he considers that comprehensions of deity are of far less consequence than just ideas of a man's own self,"[1] but how can a man have a just idea of himself apart from some idea of God? According to his idea of God will be his estimate of himself. Buddhism, by ignoring God and preaching morality, has certainly failed to make its adherents moral, and it has imparted to what is noble in their morality the melancholy of despair.[2]

Ignoring God, it could only form, or could not emancipate itself from, a false conception of man, as part of a material system of things; but man, though considerably involved in a material system, never can be interpreted by it. On the contrary, nature can only be interpreted or properly understood in man as the lower in the higher. Man is an antagonist of nature; he is for ever condemning its ways, coming into collision with its laws, refusing to live its life. Out of this collision emerges his religion, while his morality originates in the conflict between his own sense of duty and its life of animal instinct.[3] To conform to nature, he must become a brute, but he has in him ideals and

[1] Mr. Alabaster, *Wheel of the Law*, preface, p. xvi.

[2] Eitel, *Lectures on Buddhism*, pp. 59-70; Saint-Hilaire, *Le Bouddha*, p. 156.

[3] Jackson's Bampton Lectures, *The Doctrine of Retribution*, p. 284; Caird's *Philosophy of Religion*, Croall Lectures, pp. 259 *seq.*

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capacities transcending it, and by exercising these capacities in pursuit of his ideals he finds his life. Buddha confessed to an ideal, and wrought hard to realise it, but alas for humanity when it finds no higher than self to reverence! Buddha's theories of self-culture and self-deliverance reduced to practice have proved most miserable failures. It could not be otherwise; no man is likely to move the ship in which he sits by puffing away at the sails, or to lift himself out of the mire by simply pulling away at his boots; and no philosophy of self-culture, self-control, or self-rescue, can succeed, which ignores or refuses to acknowledge man's instinct of worship. What he most needs is not law, not a system of morality, not even an example or model to copy, but inspiration. He knows already enough to condemn himself, and he has examples which, though far from perfect, quite suffice to confound him. The command to be perfect mocks him as truly as a command to see would mock a man stone-blind. What he does want is a powerful moral energy within him, for lack of which he has to confess that he cannot do the good he would, but is ever doing the evil which he would not. His real wretchedness is not his suffering and death, not even his ignorance, as Buddha thought, but the continual and seemingly ineffectual struggle between the animal and the man, the flesh and the

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spirit. And Buddhism was powerless to help him here. It lacked the steady support of the sense of duty to the highest and best, the inspiration that comes from the faith that the highest and best is for us, and is with us, and in us. Belief in God, as Bacon reminds us, is "essential to the consciousness of our nobility and dignity, for certainly man is of kin to the beasts by his body, and if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature." So Buddhism in unduly exalting man to the level of deity has in reality degraded him. It has indeed lifted wild races out of barbarism, but it has failed to civilise them. It has certainly not destroyed ignorance, and the worship of intelligence has not tended to its development and diffusion among the peoples whom it has swayed. Judged even by an ordinary standard, the monks of either Southern or Northern Buddhism are rarely found to be enlightened men, while the vast portion of the peoples among whom these monks are found are about the most ignorant of all. And just as certainly has it failed to make men free; for religion is the guarantee of freedom. "Where there is no place left in human thought for deity, there will soon be none found for human liberty."[1] The basis of individual right is the recognition of a

[1] Saint-Hilaire, *Le Bouddha*, p. xxiii; Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*, p. 312.

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divine and purely moral government of man. If there be no higher than the highest man regarding us, we have only the right to live under the power of the strongest, and the reign of terror must succeed to that of order and law. The history of Buddhism and the miserable governments associated with it are telling comments upon and confirmation of the truth that belief in God is necessary to secure the rights of man.[1]

The progress of the human race will ever be in proportion to the strength of its conviction that it is governed and considered and sustained by a Power of infinite goodness ever making for righteousness. Such a conviction means inspiration, stimulating endurance and hope, and resolute struggle with evil in all its forms. In it is implied the assurance that resistance can never be in vain, that failure at the very worst is only partial success, and that all things work together for good. The time for this gospel had not come when Buddha called upon the people of India to "save themselves from this condition of wretchedness," and the result of his mighty and benevolent efforts shows convincingly how urgent in human nature is the demand

[1] "Prefix the name of God to this Declaration" (of the Rights of Man), said Abbé Grégoire to the National Assembly in 1789, "or you leave it without foundation, and make right the equivalent of force." The Assembly refused, but events soon confirmed his judgment.—Baring Gould, *Development of Belief*, vol. ii. p. 88.

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for a Faith which will not only enlighten but enliven, which, recognising fully not only the sufferings but the whole necessities of man, and creating strong discontent with the world as we find it, and even disgust of human life as it is, will quicken in us persevering and deathless efforts to reform the one and to improve the other. Such a faith it is our privilege and awful responsibility to communicate. Our religion is higher than our grasp, for it is always above us. Alas! in too many cases it is higher than our aim, for we are too inclined to let it slip, and drift on the tides of things as they are; but mankind will never be satisfied with a lower. "Après l'invention du blé ils ne veulent pas encore vivre du gland." "We needs must love the highest when we see it," and we needs must strive to become like the highest when we love it. The gospel preaches consolation and hope to a suffering world, and promises grace upon grace to every endeavour to heal and amend its condition. Christ purifies and improves the life which we have by destroying only what is evil, and by preserving and training and ennobling all that is truly natural. Inexorably He demands the extinction of selfishness in all its forms, and He will not even permit us in our prayers to think and ask for ourselves. He reminds us that God is our Father in heaven, and what He gives is for all His family.

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Sternly He denounces as sinful the attempt to secure our own happiness here or in a better world hereafter; but He offers the heaven and Nirvana which He found in assuming the burdens of others, and in bearing their cross. So He assures us that it is worth our while to live, even in a world groaning and travailing with suffering, and that it will be worth our while, even in agony if we must, to die. It is indeed a very evil world, but as long as we draw our inspiration from Him we can live in it not only without damage but with great profit. When we offer ourselves in His strength for its salvation we will be saved from its sins. In the times of our deepest distress we will have the peace which He left us, and when most severely beset and cast down with sorrow because of what seems baffled endeavours, we have only to think of that hope of ultimate victory which made Him to endure to the end, to rise into

> "that last large joy of all,
> Trust in the goodness and the love of Him
> Who, making so much well, will end all well."

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LECTURE V.

THE BUDDHIST SANGHA [1]: THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE designation "Church," never wholly applicable to Buddhism in the sense in which Christians employ it, was totally inapplicable to the primitive Buddhist communities. The institution of the Church is peculiar to Christianity, for though we speak of the worship of Krishna, or the religion of Baal, we never speak of the church of the one or the other. Christianity is the only religion which has created a society which no political revolution can destroy, and no civilisation, however advanced, can outlive. It may change its form, or express itself in several co-existent forms; but it is so adapted to the nature and necessities of man that it is properly described, in its relation to his present condition, as divine and everlasting.

Though the Church is the creation of Christ and the fruit of His mission, the idea of it had been suggested to the world long ages before He

[1] *Sangha*, originally an assembly (of disciples gathered around a Hindu sage). In Buddhism, the entire fraternity (like the Order of Francis or Dominic).—Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 176.

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came. "Ecclesia" is peculiarly a New Testament word, but there are found in the Old Testament Scriptures plain foreshadowings of the reality represented by it. In Abraham, "called" out from his country and kindred, that he might be separated unto the worship of Jehovah, we have the first preintimation of the Church. In relation to other nations, his descendants were the "peculiar people" and Ecclesia of Jehovah, and when as a nation they failed to embody and express the universal truths, which it is the Church's function to communicate for the blessing of all the world, there was called out from them, or rather there was formed within them, "the remnant," so often referred to by Isaiah and the subsequent prophets; and in this spiritual community and fellowship, dissociated from the national religion,[1] were conserved and perpetuated the truths and ideals from which they had fallen away. After the Captivity, in the rise of the synagogue system of worship, there was provided an organisation, whose essential details Christ and His apostles in instituting the Church could either adopt or copy; and there can be no question that from out this synagogue system the Christian Church emerged, and that even to-day it reflects some of its peculiar features.

The Church was the fruit of Christianity, but

[1] Robertson Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 275.

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the Sangha was the root out of which Buddhism sprang. In a Sangha its founder lived and learned and taught, till as Buddha he founded his own; but just as he gave a new significance to the doctrines in which he had been instructed, so he gave the Sangha an application which accounts for, though it does not justify, the designation often accorded to it of a church. As an order without worship, a brotherhood without any recognition of the uniting Fatherhood in heaven, a confraternity in which seniority was assigned only to age,[1] and whose leaders never pretended to hold any priestly office or to exercise any hierarchical authority, the Sangha at first and for long was not a church; yet when we examine its constitution and aims we need not wonder that the religious instincts of Buddhists, proving stronger than their creed, should have developed their Sangha into something like a church, with a cult which, at first consisting only of veneration for his images and relics, for long has been almost second to none in the world for solemnity and dignity and pomp.[2]

We have seen that philosophic schools and religious sects originating in secessions from the national religion abounded in India long before Buddha's day. In the Gangetic valley, as in

[1] Kullavagga, vi. 2. 3, 4; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx.

[2] Weber, *Indian Literature*, p. 306.

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Greece, the new sages attracted their disciples by the fame of their teaching, but there, not as in Greece, the disciples lived with their masters apart, and distinguished from the world by peculiar dress and manners. Of Monachism, an early outgrowth of Hindu religion, and indeed its essential adjunct, as being the state which marked the maturity and completion of a good man's earthly life, there were already many forms, all held in high respect by the people. Celibacy and mendicancy were common to all Sanghas, but in regard to vows of silence, and fasting, and self-torture, they differed greatly from one another. The majority of them were Brahman in their constitution and in their recognition of caste: but long before the rise of Buddhism the Sraman fraternities, founded on the non-recognition of caste, were quite equal to the purest Brahman ones in public esteem. Now in organising the Sakya-putta-Samanas, the designation by which his disciples were first known by the people, Buddha adopted many features and details of discipline common to all these fraternities, while yet the peculiarity of his doctrines gave to the community of his own disciples a character quite distinctive.

The Brahman Orders believed that Brahmans only could be finally saved, and Brahman reformers could only encourage inferior castes that came to them for enlightenment by the hope of possibly

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securing a higher birth in a future state. Buddha, however, considered all men alike in respect of need, so, knowing of only one way of deliverance, he proclaimed it without distinction, and, like the Sramans, he opened his Sangha to all who were willing to submit to his discipline. Unlike many of the Sraman fraternities, he discouraged the life of solitude, and prohibited the practice of self-torture and severe austerities. In opposition to the hated Nigganthas, who, aiming at perfection, went about with only the light and air for their clothing, he insisted that his disciples should be decently clad.[1] In respect that he required obedience from disciples only as long as they continued to be so, and would not permit irrevocable vows—indeed, exacted from them no vow at all—his Sangha was more like some Anglican guild than any monastic institution with which we are acquainted.

Still more widely did it differ, not only from many, but from all the existing fraternities in the purpose for which he instituted it. Hitherto India had never witnessed a religious sect that could be called propagandist. Brahmanism was essentially exclusive, for no man could become a Brahman by conversion. The Sraman sages again, left the

[1] Dhammapadda, 141; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Part i.; Pâtimokkha Sekhiyâ Dhammâ, 1, 2, 3, 4; *ibid.* vol. xiii. p. 59.

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masses to ripen in evil ways for worse lives in more degraded spheres of future existence, in order to deliver themselves by ascetic practices and meditation. At best they taught those who resorted to them, and were prepared to consort with them. Buddha, however, by laying upon the brethren the obligation of extending the knowledge of the law, inaugurated a revolution in the monastic system which anticipated that of the great Mendicant Orders of Christendom. Just as St. Francis emptied the monasteries and sent forth their inmates to find their own in seeking the salvation of others, so Buddha broke down the barriers between the Indian recluses and the world, by ordaining the members of his Sangha to teach their fellow-men the way to liberty. "Therefore, O brethren, to whom the truths which I have perceived have been made known by me, having thoroughly mastered them, meditate upon them, practise them, spread them abroad, in order that the pure Dhamma may last long and be perpetuated, in order that it may continue to be for the good and happiness of the great multitude, out of pity for the world, to the good, and gain, and weal of gods and men."[1]

This was the original element[2] in his conception, and while one of its effects was to save the members

[1] Mahâparanibhâna Sutta, iii. 65; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi.

[2] Kuenen, Hibbert Lectures, p. 279.

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of the Sangha from some of the evils besetting the life of the recluse by balancing the duty of contemplation by that of active itineration, its chief and immediate result was to give Buddhism an expansive power marvellous to Indians. Religious fraternities depended upon the presence of their teachers, and consequently the members were few, but Buddha commanded the brethren to go forth. "Let not two of you go the same way" was the original instruction, and preach the doctrine "which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, glorious in the end, in the spirit and in the letter, for the pure and perfect life, for the complete cessation of sorrow."[1] By and by these missionaries were authorised to receive those who desired admission into the Sangha, and after a due novitiate to ordain them;[2] and so we need not wonder that this itineracy, which in the earliest days was the very essence of a good Buddhist's duty, should have had the effect of spreading the doctrines and gathering converts so rapidly that in some of the earliest extant scriptures the Sangha was known as "the Brotherhood of the Four Quarters"[3] of what to Indian thought was the world.

Thus far the Sangha was different from the

[1] Mahavagga, i. 11; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 12; *ibid.* vol. xiii.

[3] *Ibid.* viii. 27. 5; *ibid.* vol. xvii.; Kullavagga, vi. 1. 3; *ibid.* vi. 9. 2; *ibid.* vol. xx.

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institutions that preceded it, but, unlike the Christian Church, which finally emerged from Judaism as the one holy Church of all nations and of both sexes, and of all classes of men, the Buddhist Sangha bore with it, and never lost, several marks of its Hindu origin. One relic of its extraction it most zealously conserved as essential to the moral restraint which it encouraged; for though later on it attracted associates whom it recognised as in the ways of deliverance, it was from the very first an exclusively monastic order. Indeed, Monachism, or the life of retirement, privation, and chastity, had in Buddhism a place quite different from that which it occupied in Brahmanism.[1] The meditative Brahman anchorite was not considered the only man who was in the way to deliverance, for every believer in Brahman ascendency was free to choose one of three ways of securing salvation,[2] but in Buddhism renunciation of the world represented the highest form of religion, and the indispensable condition of reaching Nirvana. So, though in opening the Sangha to all classes, and

[1] Kuenen, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 251 *seq.* The doctrine that it bore nobler fruit is expressly contradicted by some. See Âpastamba, pres. ii. pat. ix. khan. 23; also pres. ii. pat. ix. k. 24. 15; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. ii. pp. 156, 159.

[2] The way of "Works"—ceremonial and sacrificial religion; the way of "Faith"—devotion (heart) to the deities without works; the way of "Knowledge," or true enlightenment.—Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 95.

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proclaiming, in opposition to Brahmanism, that every man was capable of the highest enlightenment, Buddha sapped the foundation of caste, it was only to replace it in another form.[1] The mendicant monk, as has been truly observed, took the Brahman's place, and for him alone Nirvana was reserved. So sharply defined were the lines which divided the Sangha from the rest of mankind, that no one who had not come out from the world was regarded as in it and of it.

This was quite in keeping with the Buddhist conception of deliverance. The Sangha simply was an attempt to realise the idea and purpose of the creed. Salvation according to Christ meant rescue from the power of evil, but not withdrawal from the world as so incurably evil that the sooner man got out of it the better. Instead of making His Church an asylum and refuge from the world, He organised it for the redemption of the world. Instead of attempting to destroy civil society, He aimed at its purification by the leavening influence of the new society which He was creating. The Church was to be Christ's witness when He was no longer visible, the instrument by which His own power would bear upon the wants of mankind. The slavery and the degradation of society, the destruction of the world, was never meant to be the condition of

[1] Saint-Hilaire, *Le Bouddha, etc.*, p. 152.

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the existence or of the liberty and dignity of the Church. It was but a means to an end, a means so essential that without it the end could not be reached, but, once the end has been reached, the Church will be superseded, or rather will be merged in the kingdom of God. So the very symbol of it is not found in the apocalyptic visions of the new heaven and the new earth. In the civitas of the new Jerusalem St. John saw families and nations and kingdoms, but he could see no temple therein, for the instrumentality of which the temple was the symbol had done its work in the emancipation and education of the human race, and had vanished into the more glorious and eternal realities of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In Buddhism we find a set of ideas quite contradictory to all these. The Sangha was the vehicle of rescue from out the world, not the bringer of salvation to it; it worked not for the regeneration of society, but for its disintegration and destruction. It considered the world to be so hopelessly incurable, and even existence to be so weighted with misery, that wisdom would move men to abandon the one to its fate, and goodness impel them to strive to bring the other to an end. The monastery, therefore, was naturally its loftiest conception of the Civitas Dei, and into that it endeavoured to

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transform as large a section of humanity as was inclined to accept its law.

This unnatural theory of life indicates the essential weakness of Buddhism, and makes its history very instructive to Christians. In the Church, perhaps, room may be accorded to the monastery and convent, as long as they are sanctified by the Christian idea of self-abnegation in the service of others, but the attempt to transform the Church into a monastery, dominated by the Buddhist idea of abnegation of the world for the sake of self, can only create unmitigated evil. The effect of it in primitive Buddhism was not only to withdraw good men from the world at the very time when its diseased condition most required the help of their preserving salt, but the salt itself, not being used for its natural and proper purpose, soon lost its savour. The substitution of an artificial for a natural standard of excellence inevitably tends to destroy even virtue. Very soon in the Sanghas active itineracy and devout contemplation gave way to listless indolence and enervating reverie, and there emerged a mode of life from which the great mass of healthy men will ever revolt, as sanctioning the idea that the more useless we become in this world the more fitted for a better we may safely consider ourselves to be.

The Buddhist Sangha, therefore, though in no

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sense resembling the Christian Church, does resemble some of its after-growths. These, however, must be regarded as parasitical in their nature, for though fed by its life, they do not spring from its root. In Christianity, Monachism represents a tendency of human nature incidental to its development rather than the essential fruit of Christian principle; but the Buddhist idea of a true society is one essentially and completely monastic. This one fact is sufficient to show that the similarities discoverable between the Buddhist and Christian institutions are more apparent than real, while the contrasts between them are found to be deeper and more substantial the more they are examined.

The monachism of Christianity originated, it is said, in the endeavour to reproduce the ideal of excellence represented in the life of Jesus. In the life of Jesus there was nothing monastic. Though He appeared in the land of the Essenes, though heralded by a solitary ascetic, though the age was one of universal defection, when because of its corruption it seemed impossible to live a man's life in society, Jesus lived freely in the world as He found it, and laid His blessing on all of it that was natural, and on all of it that was necessary. He did not refuse to enjoy any of the good gifts of God; He warned us against despising or

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throwing them away, though He asked us to be ready, when love calls, to let them go, or relinquish them for the good of others. He gave Himself wholly to His mission, and He took no thought for the morrow. If He called His apostles from their secular callings, it was not because such callings hindered their own salvation, but because, withdrawn from them for love of God and man, they would be freer to serve the world. We have interpreted the Apostolate as expressing His desire that in the Church there will always be an order devoted specially to the service of religion, but this form of service was never meant to be regarded as the only religious service. If one calling is consecrated, it is as one day is consecrated, that all may be sanctified thereby. The world was never renounced by the apostles that they might work out their own salvation; and if they "exercised" themselves it was because self-control fitted them to render more valuable service for man's redemption. The missionary zeal which drove the members of the Primitive Church all over the world to sow the seeds of truth and love made them take no thought of what they should eat or what they should drink; and missionary zeal all through the Christian ages has manifested the same indifference to the *βιωτικά* of existence; but those who have been most inspired by it, and who

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have found nothing impracticable in following the manner of life which our Lord Himself led, have never deemed it the only way, or even the highest way, of Christian service. It was that to which they felt inwardly moved and called by the Holy Ghost, and, like the apostles, they exhorted all others to abide in the callings wherein they were called.

Primitive Christianity, like any other religion, was susceptible to morbid affections, and the germs of disease with which the atmosphere around it was charged found early a lodgment within it, and soon matured into portentous fertility. The persecutions of the Church, the terrible corruption of the world, the troubles and temptations consequent on the first junction of Christianity with the Imperial Power, the mistaken idea that the world which the Church had manifestly failed to transform, or even preserve, was doomed, and that Christ was speedily coming in His glory to judge it, strengthened the ascetic tendency to come out and be separate from it.[1] By the end of the third century the deserts of Egypt and Arabia, and the mountains of Asia Minor, were so peopled with recluses that in one spot alone there were ten thousand men and twenty thousand women. At

[1] Not without protest, however, by fathers and doctors of the Church. See Hermas, *Simil.* v.; Clem. *Strom.* iii.; Tertullian, *De Jejunio*, p. 123 *seq.*; *De Pallio*, p. 181 *seq.*

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the close of another century Monachism had a home in every province of the Oriental Church, and monks and nuns formed "a nation," as distinct from the clergy as the clergy were from the common believers, and in many instances they were hated and persecuted by clergy and laity alike.[1]

The original purpose of the founders of the new institution, however, was not to shelter mystics and visionaries, but to train soldiers and martyrs. Solitude was not intended to be an asylum for the weak, or an infirmary for the diseased, but an arena for the training and testing of athletes. "Come," says Chrysostom,[2] "and see the tents of the soldiers of Christ. Come, behold their order of battle." Augustine also refers to them as "milites Christi," even as later on they were designated as "the chivalry of the Church" and "the paladins of God." Though not of the world, and being above its ways, they were yet in it and for it. So these retreats were not only technical schools, representing the industries essential to the well-being of man; they were also academies for sacred studies, from which went forth champions like Athanasius to defend the faith against the heretic, and like Basil to defend the Church against the

[1] Gieseler, *Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. pp. 289 *seq.*; Neander's *Church Hist.* vol. iii. pp. 305 *seq.*

[2] Hom. on St. Matth. 69, 70.

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Empire. They were also brotherhoods of charity, in which in self-imposed austerities men grew tender in respect for the miseries of others, and anticipated in much more unfavourable times the hospitals for "sick children" and "lepers" and "incurables," which we are inclined to regard as the peculiar products of the latest Christian centuries.[1] Of course, early Christian Monachism had its ridiculous extravagances, in types like the Stylites and Browsers; and of course even its soberer types soon degenerated through over cultivation, till it became a greater hindrance to the spread of Christianity than all external opposition and persecution. The spirit of piety which it originated was speedily poisoned by superstition; theological discussion supplanted the love of earnest study; the spirit of obedience and loyalty was superseded by that of intrigue and revolt. So though it spread, it was not as a contagion of health, but as an infectious disease, whose evil effects are traceable in the decrepitude which the Oriental Church has never been able to throw off.

In the Western Church, Monachism, though less brilliant in its beginnings than its Eastern precursor, has had a longer and healthier course. It is not within the scope of this lecture even to

[1] Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, vol. i. p. 319; Neander's *Church History*, vol. iii. pp. 338, 339.

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sketch it, or to analyse and tabulate its results. We live in an age which has certainly little sympathy with the ideal of Christianity which it sought to realise, but that is not sufficient reason that we should affect to despise it, or imagine that we have outgrown the necessity for it. The life of the recluse may be beyond our attainment, for we may be so afraid to be alone, and so unable to endure "conversation with ourselves," that we have to take refuge in perpetual society. The "weakness" of the old asceticism many of us have not the strength to practise, for we are too much under the dominion of the flesh, which they at least could master, and we are far too inclined to treat with unnecessary tenderness what they chastised and immolated. The vows of poverty and obedience and chastity may be the very medicine we require, in a condition of public sentiment so unhealthy that a man's standing, and worth, and even life, seems to consist in the abundance of his goods, and his freedom in licence to despise all authority and indulge all his likings. No doubt, in the West as in the East, Monachism eventually became an impediment to Christian civilisation, but not until it had considerably regenerated and uplifted it. It kept before the Church the dignity of manual labour, it wiped out the discredit attaching to honest poverty, it proclaimed the equality

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of men by treating rich and poor alike, and it proved the defender of the oppressed, the mediator between the strong and the feeble. "We are the poor of Christ," says Bernard, "and the friendship of the poor makes us the equals of kings." Then just as unquestionably it was the pioneer of learning and of enterprise, the guardian of law and the fosterer of charity. There is hardly a city or populous centre in Europe which does not owe its churches, universities, hospitals, charitable institutions, either in their origin or growth, to the cœnobites and celibates of former ages; and whether we acknowledge or repudiate our debt to them, "its magnitude confronts us more imposingly the more we honestly consider it."

But like all unnatural segregations of human beings from society, for which man was made, Monachism everywhere became eventually an excuse for indolence and misanthropy; a refuge for the melancholy, and for all who had become unfit to serve either the world or the Church. Its whole history in the Christian Church has justified the warning of St. Paul against artificial methods of attaining to saintliness. The vices which beset society never lost any of their power over the recluses of the desert or the inmates of the monastery, while many other vices were added to the host that assailed the solitary, undefended

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by his fellows.[1] "Woe to him that is alone, for when he falls there is not another to raise him up! Woe to him that is alone, for there is no one to keep him from falling!" are the lessons of this long mistaken attempt to realise an undemanded standard of excellence; and yet, just because of the consistency of its ideal with one side of Christian service, modern Christendom, though in altered and modified forms, has not parted with Monachism yet.

"The ideal of the Christian monk," says Montalembert, "is that of manhood in its purest and most energetic form—manhood intellectually and morally superior, devoting itself to efforts greater and more sustained than are exacted in a worldly career; and this not to make earthly service a stepping-stone to heaven, but of life a long series of victories for man."[2] Surely this is the ideal of every Christian minister truly consecrated to the service of man; yea, the ideal of every brother or sister who, married or single, in business or society, is trying to reach forward to the mark of our high calling. There is no code of disabilities in the service of Christ, and the way to the highest honours is open to all who wish to

[1] Cassian, *Collationes*, ii. 5-8; *De Instit. Monachi*, x.; *De capitalibus vitiis*, quoted by Farrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. ii. p. 224; Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ii. 510.

[2] *Monks of the West*, vol. i. p. 27.

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enter it, of whatever condition or rank or mental capacity they may be. When this common ideal was fallen from in the monastic orders, it was being realised by many private members of the Church; when the professional Church had falsified it, it was being upheld by so-called "men of the world"; and therefore, as a natural consequence, when the monastic orders of Christendom became corrupt, society, true to its better instincts, rose up and reformed them or swept them away. There was always a large volume of life outside the particular channel which these orders filled, to purify it when it became foul, or to force it onward, when stagnant, into the life of the Church.

But it was not so in Buddhism. Its lay associates, however numerous, were but the fringes of religious communities essentially and wholly monastic. When, therefore, deterioration or degradation in the Order set in, reformation of it by the people was hopeless. In the Order this deterioration showed itself earlier that its dominant ideal was lower than the Christian. In early Christian Monachism, fortitude and devotion all sprang from the immolation of self for the universal good. In Buddha's Sangha, however, though there was both devotion and fortitude displayed, the goal to be reached was simply self-rescue. Its course of beneficence therefore was not only

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shorter but shallower. Unintentionally it wrought out social reforms, and perhaps political revolution. It restrained luxury, and checked the unbounded sensuality to which Indians are prone; it rebuked the earthly-minded, and witnessed nobly of the higher interests of life to peoples that sorely needed the testimony. It not only propagated morality, but promoted learning, and a love of the beautiful in nature and art, but its force was eventually exhausted. Very early it sank into the stagnation in which it has existed for centuries, and any advance registered by the nations among whom the institution has existed has been due, for more than a thousand years, to the influx of Christian ideas and sentiments.

Its own methods hastened its decay. Like all Eastern religious growths, it represented the piety of inertion. Manual labour of all kinds was placed under the ban, and beyond attending to the cleanliness of his person and of his lodging the Buddhist monk was not allowed to do anything save itinerate for his maintenance and the preaching of the law. He was instructed that every moment abstracted from meditation was serious loss. This was in direct contradiction to the very first rule of Christian solitary life, which even in the stifling heat of the desert demanded manual tasks, which fasting might be said to have

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doubled, continued through the long day till vespers summoned the labourers to worship. The Buddhist monk knew neither the healthy life of physical exertion nor the spiritual refreshment of worship. He might vindicate his idleness against the reproaches of the industrious by the assertion that he too in his quiet life was also "ploughing and sowing" to much better purpose,[1] but then the effect of his ploughing and the fruit of his sowing were all confined to himself, who alone was freed by it from suffering. He could not answer, as the Nicæan monk and quondam courtier replied to Valens, when challenged as to whither he was going, "I go to pray for your empire."[2] Augustine has indeed assured us that "the less a monk labours in anything but prayer the more serviceable he is to men"; but the prayer which he had in view was not selfish. On the contrary, the tears and penitential exercises of men who had become strangers to all personal desires "were mighty to drown sin and purify the world."[3] As long as monks were truly prayerful, and nuns, like vestals, kept alive the sacred fire for every hearth, they represented that side of the Church's mediation which is most important and effective;

[1] Sutta Nipâta, 75-81; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. p. ii.

[2] Theod. *Eccles. Hist.* lib. iv. cap. 26.

[3] "They prayed for the whole world."—Chrysost. *H.* 78, *In Johannem.*

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for no one can be really effective in the service of man who is not frequent in the service of waiting upon God. The heroes of the Christian Church, who have evangelised and civilised the wild waste places of the world, who, like the apostle, laid aside every encumbrance to run their race, were, like the apostle, men of much meditation and prayer. We have no such examples in Buddhism, for it lacked the provision which alone could nurture them. In the life of the Buddhist monk there was probably more, and more intense meditation than in that of the Christian, but there was a vast difference in their respective themes of meditation. The Christian could draw his inspiration from a source far higher and purer than himself, and in communion with the Father, Redeemer, Sanctifier of his spirit gather a strength which astonished the world; but what possible inspiration for endeavour could come to a poor Buddhist monk who was chiefly occupied in contemplating the impurity of his perishable body, and whose very highest theme of meditation was simply "nothing whatever"?[1]

Another essential distinction between the two modes of life is disclosed in their relation to charity. We have seen that Buddhism had no conception of charity in the Christian sense, and that practical

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, pp. 317, 318.

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charity in it was represented from a pole quite opposite to that of Christianity. As if conscious of its defects, later Buddhism originated faith in and hope of Maitreya, the Buddha who is next to come, and who, as the son of love, will realise its unconscious prophecies, fulfil its longings, and perfect all things; but notwithstanding this the Buddhist monk continued to be the receiver, not the dispenser, of charity. His whole merit consisted in taking what it was the merit of the layman to offer him:[1] and the taking was all for himself and for his Order. He had no conception of the life suggested in the saying, "As poor, yet making many rich," and he never could have said of his monastery that it was "l'infirmière des pauvres." To offer charity to others was the last conception which he could form of his duty: yea, to clothe the naked, take the leper from the dunghill, and help the outcast, was the very reverse of his duty. His creed as to misery in this being the fruit of evil done in a former existence, cut him off from that service of the lost and fallen which in Christendom has been accounted glorious, and for the rendering of which, several of its monastic institutions have been spared the penalty of their corruption.

The charity which the Buddhist monk prac-

[1] Mahavagga, viii. 15; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xvii.

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tised was in his preaching and exposition of the law for the deliverance of the multitudes. And that this may be the very highest form in which benevolence can express itself all Christians must admit, for the greatest gift which any man can bestow is the truth which makes one free. Buddhist monk and Christian missionary alike proclaimed a gospel for the redemption of men; and as the gospel of Christ's salvation brings ever many blessings in its train, so the preaching of the mendicant Buddhist was attended with material beneficial results to those who heard and believed it. The Buddhist, however, while expounding the law for the rescue of the individual, never laboured, like the Christian missionary, for his temporal and social improvement. His message had no promise for the life that now is, and consequently he never seems to have played the part so nobly sustained by many of the monks of Christendom—that of defending the oppressed and befriending the helpless. He never, so far as can be gathered from the texts, proclaimed the equality of men in the same way and for the same purpose as a Christian reformer would preach it. Theoretically, he maintained the right of all classes to be admitted to the brotherhood, but Dr. Oldenberg has asserted that "in the composition of the Order a marked leaning to the existing aristocracy

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was observable."[1] Buddha never had occasion to confess with the Christian apostle "that not many noble, not many mighty, were called," nor had his Order ever to bear the reproach of the Church, that its members were recruited from the lowest strata of society. The references to his disciples from the first all indicate people of rank and wealth and education. It is not implied that persons of humble origin would have been rejected had they come, only that "the scriptures afford no evidence that they did come"; and yet they yield unmistakable evidence that, as the Order prospered, all lepers, cripples, blind, or one-eyed persons, all who were deaf and dumb, all who were consumptive or subject to fits, were rejected.[2] The Order was for the reputable, the noble, and especially for the religious, for the Brahman votary, and Sraman seeker after truth. These again were all attracted to it; they were not sought out as by the Christian Church. Not for one moment would Christ allow the Church to become select. He not only welcomed all penitents—for all men needed salvation, and the poorest and the guiltiest were most

[1] "I am not aware of any instances in which the pariah of the age is mentioned as a member of the Order." "According to Buddhist dogmatics, a good Sudra or Vaisya could only hope to be re-born as a Kshatrya, and this clearly indicates that the distinctions of castes had by no means vanished or become worthless in Buddha's consciousness" (*Buddha, etc.*, p. 156).

[2] Mahavagga, i. 39. 76; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii.

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in need of it,—but He sent forth His apostles to seek and gather them, and in order to reason down all natural fears, based on the personal unworthiness of these outcasts of society, they were instructed to "compel them to come in."[1]

Of propagandism in this sense the Buddhist Sangha knew nothing. It was moved by no enthusiasm of humanity; it felt nothing of that earnestness which from the days of the apostles has characterised the true propagators of the gospel. In no discourse that has come down to us is there any impassioned entreaty of men to repent and believe. There is no sorrow over the unbelieving who refuse their salvation, no burning indignation against those who despise or who scoff at the truth. In Buddha's last view of the world there is no weeping as over Jerusalem, reprobate because of its wickedness, and in none of his successors do we find any trace of the apostle's willingness to be anathema for the sake of his brethren.

This tolerant spirit of Buddhism, however, has been contrasted, as greatly in its favour, with that alleged intolerance which Christianity is supposed to have inherited from Judaism. We must

[1] Christianity does not, as Goethe averred, "prefer what is despised and feeble," but as in God's eyes nothing is despised and abject, so, in fellowship with the Father, Christ cherished the maimed and lame and blind, though hated of the soul of the natural man, and this disposition will ever be a "mark" or "note" of the true Church of Christ.

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remember that Christianity must be judged as it is presented in Christ, and not by His professing followers, who have often misrepresented Him. Of hypocrisy, cruelty, deceit, Christ was indeed intolerant, but toward error and misbelief, because of ignorance, He was very compassionate. Christianity would make no compromise, again, with false systems of heathendom. It would have no peace save through victory ; it would not accept a place in the Pantheon for its Lord, and it was content to be persecuted till He was allowed to rule from the throne of the world. The alleged intolerance of Christianity, therefore, is simply its conviction of the infinite importance and value to all men of the truth which compels it to be propagandist. Now if Buddhism tolerates everything, it is because it is not sure about anything, but, on the contrary, is in doubt about everything. It is essentially sceptical, "raising the rejection of every affirmation to the rank of a principle."[1] Earnestness in a preacher of sceptical quietism was an impossibility. He had no heart touched with the feeling of heavenly love, wounded by sin, impelling him to proclaim forgiveness, and he had no such hearts to appeal to. The Christian missionary appeals to soul and conscience in name of a Saviour crucified for sin ; the Buddhist

[1] Kuenen, Hibbert Lectures, 1882, p. 284 ; Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, 1881, p. 155.

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missionary only appealed through the intellect to self-interest. His preaching was purely didactic, expository, and advisory in character. He was at best a theologian or moral philosopher teaching the ignorant, and not a preacher aiming at the conviction of sinners, endeavouring, with his whole heart and strength and mind, to sway them to conversion.[1] He never experienced the almost consuming glow and fervour of inspiration which made the apostles agonise in their mission. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." "I pray you, in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God." As might have been expected, the early enthusiasm of Buddhists for the enlightenment of others soon died out, and its missionary spirit, once spent, has never undergone a true revival. It can boast of many ecclesiastics and philosophers, but for hundreds of years it cannot point in its honour-roll to either a Xavier or a Livingstone. It has long ago ceased to be aggressive. At this day no Oriental Buddhist seriously contemplates becoming a missionary. Paris may add to its attractions and curiosities a real Buddhist temple,[2] but the priests who officiate in it, however devoted they may be to their cult, will certainly never dream of taking the trouble of preaching it in the streets.

[1] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, pp. 181, 182.

[2] *The Scotsman*, August 17th, 1889.

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In the Church of the middle ages, supposed to consist only of pope and bishops and clergy and monks and nuns, of which mediævalism a remnant survives in those who speak of "entering the Church," not when as children they are baptized into its communion, but when they are to be ordained to service in it, we must look for any resemblance to the Buddhist Sangha. In ancient India, a church, meaning the fellowship of the faithful in its totality, was an impossibility. Brahmanism had no church, and never attempted a conversion, but Buddha in seeking to rescue others from evil, and in offering a place of escape which they were free to accept or reject, created not a church but a precursor of one.[1] Admission into his Brotherhood was at first open to all who requested it, but as disciples crowded around him, and parents complained that they were bereaved of their children, and masters that they were robbed of their slaves, and creditors that they were deprived of what was owing by their debtors, and even the judges that criminals escaped the prison; and when accusations grew frequent and loud that the new movement would ruin households, injure the State, and depopulate the country, restrictions were devised. Gradually conditions were imposed by which all who were diseased, or

[1] E. Burnouf, *Science des Religions*, p. 94.

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criminals, or soldiers, or debtors, or slaves, or children under fifteen years of age, or youths under twenty who had not received their parents' consent, were disqualified.[1] At first the disciple was admitted without any ceremony, beyond that of shaving the whole head, and putting on the yellow robes which distinguished the ascetic and the recluse, but eventually a rite of initiation was adopted, which in Ceylon has continued substantially unaltered to this day.

It consisted of two stages;[2] the first that of the novitiate into which a canditate could be received by any fully accredited monk. The ceremony was called the Pabbagga, or "outgoing," a word used from old time to describe the last act of a pious Brahman, when, warned by approaching age, he gave up his possessions to his family, and left them to enter upon the hermit life of meditation. The Buddhists naturally adopted it to mark the first step by which a layman at any age exchanged the secular for the religious life. It was a confession that he desired to be done with the world, to put off the old man with his deeds and to put on the new. So with head and face completely shaven, and holding three lengths of yellow cotton cloth, first torn to render them valueless, and then

[1] Mahavagga, i. 49. 6.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 54. 5; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii.

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sewed together, he presented his petition three times, that "the reverend monks would take pity on him, and invest him with the robes, that, like them, he might escape sorrow." The presiding monk then tied the clothes around his neck, repeating sentences regarding the perishable nature of the body, and the petitioner retired. When he reappeared he had laid aside the loin-cloth, generally the only article of raiment in tropical lands, and had assumed the new investiture of the two under-garments and the loose robe, which covered the whole body, except the right shoulder, of a Buddhist mendicant. Three times, thus clothed, in "robes of humility and religion," in reverential salaam to the monk or monks present, he made public confession that he took refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, and receiving instructions as to conduct and duty, he became a Sramanera, a bachelor as it were, a monk of lower degree.

When the novice who had thus "gone forth" from the world, or from the membership of another fraternity, had "seen the truth, mastered the truth, understood the truth, penetrated the truth; when he had overcome uncertainty, dispelled all doubts, was dependent on nobody else for his knowledge of the doctrines of the Teacher,"[1] he presented himself before the Order, of whom ten members

[1] Mahavagga, i. 7. 10-15; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii.

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at least had to be in session, and reverentially cowering on the ground with his hands clasped on his forehead, he three times entreated them "to take pity upon him and draw him out of the evil world by granting him Upasampada" or the "arrival" initiation rite.[1] Then followed his examination as to whether he was qualified[2] in his person, his health, his social and civil relations, whether he had provided an alms-bowl and the yellow robes, what was his own name, and that of the teacher with whom he was to consort, and whom he was to serve during a course of five years' instruction in the whole doctrine and discipline of the system. If the answers to all these questions were satisfactory, the resolution to receive him was formally put by the presiding monk, and thrice repeated: "Whosoever of the venerable is for granting Upasampada to this novice, with brother So-and-so for his teacher, let him be silent." When no dissent was intimated the resolution was passed. "The Sangha is in favour of it, therefore it is silent—thus I understand," said the president, and the novice became a Samana, a fully accredited member of the Order of Bikkhus.

There was certainly nothing of the Church in all this ceremony, and Sir Monier Williams very properly guards us from applying to it the sacred

[1] Mahavagga, i. 29.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 76. 1-10.

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word of ordination.[1] Any one who cares to read the texts in which the proceedings are described will be inclined to think that the questions put to the novice, in their childishness and absurdity, seem diabolically framed to caricature the solemn and soul-searching questions addressed to candidates for the Holy Ministry. Yet in the instruction given to the newly admitted member, concerning the "four chief forbidden acts" from which he must abstain, and "the four resources"[2] in which he was to trust, there was a touch of the solemnity which belongs to the charge which follows Christian ordination. The monk was reminded that in regard to what was pleasant and permissible to other men he had subjected himself to self-denial and a yoke. He might receive from the pious, without offence, offerings of food and clothing, and medicine and shelter, but he must be prepared for the hard life of one whose food might only be scraps and refuse put into his bowl, whose clothing might have to be made of cast-off rags, whose shelter might often be the tree in the jungle or the cave in the rock, and whose medicine

[1] *Buddhism*, p. 80 ; Dr. Rhys Davids states that a new or cloister name was given on admission, in exchange for the family one (Hibbert Lectures, p. 39), but Professor Oldenberg alleges that this is supported only by solitary cases (*Buddha, etc.*, p. 353 note).

[2] Mahavagga, i. 30. 1-4 ; also *ibid.* vi. 14. 6 ; and Kullavagga, vi. 1-2.

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might be only the foul deposit of the cattle-pen. He was warned that any breach of the four cardinal precepts—against unchastity, which to him meant what to others was the lawful estate of marriage, against theft, even of a blade of grass, against murder, even to the crushing of a flea, against assumption of virtues not really possessed,—would necessitate expulsion from the Order. "For even as a man whose head is cut off cannot live with the trunk; . . . as a dry leaf separate from the stalk can never again become green; . . . as a stone split in two cannot be made into one; . . . as a palm whose top is destroyed cannot again grow, so the monk who breaks the least of these laws is no longer a Samana, no longer a follower of the Sakya-putta."[1]

To the credit of Buddha, however, it must be observed, that a monk who had entered the Order was at any time free to withdraw from it. If he had a hankering after home, or the pleasures of the old life which he had forsaken, he was exhorted to confess his weakness and renounce a vocation which he had found too high for him. He had simply to declare before a witness that he renounced Buddha, Dharma, Sangha—yea, he could go forth without making any declaration at all. Freely as he had joined, as freely could he

[1] Mahavagga, i. 78. 1-5.

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abandon the brethren; no anger was expressed or even felt; no discredit attached to him, for the working out of his deliverance was his own concern. Yea, if at any time he repented of his action, and desired to renew with the companions of wiser days the relation of votary or novice, he was not subjected to any discipline, such as a lapsed member of the Church might be expected to undergo when seeking re-communion. He was treated upon his confession as though his past had not been remembered, and as if his folly or fault had never been committed.[1] Such facility of withdrawal and readmission seemed to tend to laxity, and may have occasioned very great abuses, but on the very face of it, it appears calculated to preserve monastic life in India in a much healthier condition than has always prevailed in the recluse institutions of Christendom. In how many cases has the monastery become worse than a prison, and the convent become a very chamber of tortures, because occupied by reluctant tenants, who have been cruelly immured in them against their will, or have thoughtlessly devoted themselves to a vocation for which they were totally unfit. The Eastern sage may even have shown greater wisdom than the Western bishops and presbyters, who have bound over for life those

[1] Mahavagga, i. 79. 1-3.

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admitted to a sacred profession, so that freedom from it can only be got by ignominious expulsion, and by degradation for a fault or a crime.

The Sangha from the first was an order of Cœnobites, not Solitaries, and it was an exception for a mendicant to be alone; for with his practical insight Buddha seems to have discovered that the life of solitude has more disadvantages and dangers than that of fellowship. So he ordained that the newly admitted monk must attach himself for five years to a tutor and teacher,[1] one of whom must have been ten years in the Order, rendering to them such personal offices as Elisha rendered to Elijah, and receiving such parental instruction as St. Paul bestowed upon his son in the faith. No vow of obedience, so essential to the monastic rule of Christendom, unless in regard to the laws of the Order, was exacted. No man could be called Rabbi among them, for the knowledge which brought deliverance could be and must be acquired by each man for himself.[2] A monk was expected to reverence his superior in age and knowledge, but his obedience was to be rendered not to his brother, who was simply

[1] Mahavagga, i. 25. 1-24, for the duties of novice to his Upagghâya; *ibid.* i. 32, Kullavagga, viii. 13, 14, for his duties to his Âkariya. The duties to both are the same, but the Upagghâya seems to have been the more important of the two tutors.

[2] Dr. Rhys Davids, *Handbook of Buddhism*, p. 169.

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his equal in respect of need and capability of deliverance, but only to *The Law* which alone could secure it.

While obedience to a superior was not exacted, the law of poverty and chastity was as obligatory upon the Buddhist monk as on the members of the Christian Orders. Francis of Assisi could not more highly have eulogised poverty as "the way to salvation, the nurse of humility, the root of perfection," than did the Indian monks who compiled the Buddhist scriptures. "In supreme felicity live we, though we call nothing our own. Feeding on happiness, we are like the gods in the regions of light."[1] Food a monk could receive, but not ask for, and of what he so received he could only have one meal a day. Gold or silver he could on no account accept, though he might accept its equivalents in food or medicine. If like Achan's wedge it was found to have been secreted by any covetous member, one of the brethren had to hide it away in the jungle, in a place which could not again be recognised. Bitter controversies regarding this prohibition seem to have exercised the primitive Sanghas, and though it was successfully maintained for long, concessions in relation to it were eventually agreed upon. These however proved as fatal to the prosperity of the Buddhist, as

[1] Dhammapada, 200 ; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Part i.

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similar concessions proved to that of the Western monastic establishments. They were seeds of evil which speedily grew up into thickets of trouble. The individual member professed to observe the original law and maintain the principle that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of his goods," but the several fraternities came speedily to abound in lands and property of every kind, so that in the East as in the West it may be said the monasteries fell, because crushed with their weight of wealth.

Even while the primitive rule was observed the mendicants could easily procure what of the necessaries of food and shelter and clothing they required; the jungle gave them all the shelter they needed, though it exposed them to frequent perils of being poisoned by snake-bites, and devoured by beasts. The rains put an end periodically to their peregrinations, and gathered the twos and threes who had been associating together into common retreat in the viharas. These originally were intended to be only temporary shelters from the annual floods, but as by degrees the system extended into distant regions, they became permanent institutions, each one a centre of influence in its own territory, like the abbeys in the original dioceses of mediæval Europe.

Life in a Buddhist vihara two thousand years

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ago must however have been very different from life in a monastic establishment in the middle ages. Labour, as we have seen, of no kind was allowed, either among them or for them. "A monk who digs the earth or causes it to be dug is liable to punishment."[1] Scant time was allowed for sleep, and when there were no books to read or transcribe, the studies or literary occupations of the West were out of the question. All the intellectual energies were claimed for the repetition of such sacred works as they knew, and for the committing to memory of others which they had only acquired. Examination of self, meditation on the five principal themes which occupied the place of prayer or devotion in their system, was expected to absorb the most of the day. Notwithstanding its intervals of instruction and discussion, it must have been a very vacant life indeed, lacking entirely the worship, and most of the duties, which rendered monastic life in Christendom, if not always profitable, at least supportable.

Two outstanding features of it, however, compare very favourably with some forms of the ascetic life both in India and Europe. In the Buddhist Sanghas would be witnessed neither the slovenliness nor the dirtiness which has often been

[1] Pâtimokkha; Pakittiyâ Dhammâ, 10; said to be because he might kill or harm some living creature.

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associated with the life of those who have renounced the world and have professed to despise its pleasant things. Around them,

> "Besmeared with mud and ashes, crouching foul,
> In rags of dead men, wrapped about their loins,"[1]

were many solitaries endeavouring to gain perfection or exhibit it, in types more conform to Nebuchadnezzar in his madness or the demoniacs who had their dwellings in the tombs. Buddha condemned uncleanliness in all its forms. The robes which he enjoined his monks to wear may have been made up of rags picked up from a dunghill or from a cemetery, but they were scrupulously washed, properly dyed, and carefully mended. The ground all round the vihara, as well as its floors within, had to be swept every day, and its every item of furniture had to be punctually dusted and garnished. His monks were Pharisees in regard to the washing of hands and bowls and other utensils, and they anticipated our modern demand for proper ventilation.[2] A Buddhist mendicant of the days of King Asoka might prove a good model of personal neatness and domestic tidiness for many a Christian minister in these days of Queen Victoria. He belonged to an Order originally founded by a man who was

[1] Sir Edwin Arnold, *Light of Asia*, p. 95.

[2] Kullavagga, v. vi. viii. *passim* ; Mahavagga, i. 25. 15.

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in every sense a gentleman, and which for long numbered among its members many noble and even princely men. Inheriting their instincts, he stoutly maintained their traditions, that "neither plaited hair, nor dirt, nor lying on the earth, nor rubbing with dust, can purify a mortal who has not overcome desires"; "that he who, though well dressed, exercises tranquillity, is quiet, subdued, restrained, chaste, and has ceased to find fault with all other beings, he is indeed a Brahmana, a Sramana, a Bikkhu."[1]

Again, in these old pictures of Buddhist Sangha life, there is no reflection of that insane passion for suffering which marked the gaunt and self-mutilated Yogis around them, and which also distinguished many of the ascetics of Christendom. The flagellations, and lacerations, and macerations which at one time became popular in European monasteries, and which made even a man like the founder of the Franciscan Order refuse food and sleep for days together, spend whole nights in winter up to the neck in snow or water, put ashes in the meals which had been cooked for him, would not for an hour have been tolerated; yea, they would have been laughed out of the world by Buddha and his monks. Wherever they went, they encountered grievous companies of

[1] Dhammapada, 141, 142; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Part i.

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"Eyeless and tongueless, sexless, crippled, deaf:
The body by the mind being thus stripped
For glory of much suffering, and the bliss
Which they shall win," [1]

but they never seem to have been tempted to give way to this intoxication which was supposed to make men gods. Self-denial was essential, but severe austerities and bodily penance were strongly discouraged. "Blooming, well-fed, with healthy colour and skin," is the description often given in the old texts of a model Bikkhu. Buddha, when first met by the Brahman sages after his illumination, surprised them by the serenity of his countenance, the purity and brightness of his complexion. Among the first salutations addressed to the brethren on their return from their wanderings was the question whether they had been well fed.[2] It is true some Buddhist saints might be found sitting for days in the burning sun, oblivious to its fiery torments, but these must have been exceptions, for there is no mistaking either the teaching or the life of Buddha himself. All these extravagant cruelties, by which men have abused or sought to destroy the most beautiful organism and the most perfect instrument which has ever been produced in this world, were by him regarded as foolish and dangerous, and as

[1] Sir Edwin Arnold, *Light of Asia*, pp. 95, 96.
[2] Mahavagga, i. 31. 4.

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debasing as the sensualism which they sought to avoid.

Though we have hitherto referred to the Buddhist Order, it is hardly correct to think of it as just one community. Though theoretically the Sangha of Buddha was the ideal unit, practically it never became so. After his decease there was no central governing power to direct and inspire the whole organisation. The patriarchs, of whom a long succession is given, were not hierarchs in the Greek or Latin sense.[1] They were simply outstanding Arhats, the heroic defenders and apostles of the system. Primitive Buddhism was represented not by one but by many Sanghas, for each brother as he went forth became the centre of a new fraternity. Its original cultus was based on the idea that community of aim would suffice to gather the knots of people who lived near each other for mutual confession and instruction and discipline. So they continued a custom which had come down from their Vedic ancestors, who, in the four days of the lunar month, when the moon is new, or full, or half-way between the two, celebrated the fast preparatory to the offering of the intoxicating Soma. The Buddhists had neither fast, nor sacrifice, nor offering, nor any form of

[1] Introduction to Dhammapada, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. p. xliv: a long list quoted from the *Northern Scripture* by Dr. Edkins in *Chinese Buddhism*.

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religious worship whatever, but in these days they gathered for careful examination of themselves in the light of the Prohibitions, for public confession one to another, and for discipline. For these weekly gatherings the manual of the Pâtimokkha or Disburdenment was composed, it is averred, by Buddha himself.[1] To this public catechising and purgation of the Roll all the brethren had to come; even a sick man was only excused when he could assure the assembly, through a sponsor, that he was clean of fault, and if no brother was available for this office the assembly had to adjourn to meet at his couch. Its president, who also summoned the brethren, was the monk of the longest standing among them. So far it seemed to anticipate our principle of Presbyterian parity, but, like Convocation, it was an exclusively ecclesiastical gathering, for neither nun, nor novice, nor layman was allowed to be present. Like our presbyteries when applying their privy censures, they expected to be "alone." Then, when all were reverentially placed, in presence of no heart-searching God, but before one another, there was recited by the president the order of confessional, according to the rule that if there was no transgression there was no interruption, and silence indicated innocence.

[1] The question was thrice put, "Are ye pure?" Mahavagga, ii. 1-36.

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First came the recitation of the gravest offences: the four Pârâgikâ renounced upon their admission, commission of any one of which involved expulsion from the Order. Then came the list of the less serious transgressions --- Samghâdisesas, involving temporary degradation, and lastly that of the Pâkittya, or venial faults, which were atoned for by simple confession. It was a lengthy, minute, ill-arranged form of inquisition, more comprehensive and rigid than any catechism of the confessional which Romanism ever devised.[1] It out-phariseed the Pharisees in its trivialities and repetitions and straining out of gnats, and no manual of the cloister ever discovered, could equal its disgusting details of every conceivable form of unnatural vice supposed to be perpetrable by the brethren.[2] It reads more like a suggestion to sin than a defence against temptation. We can understand from it alone, how impossible it was for Buddhism to live up to its true principles, how incapable it was of urging on the steady moral progress of the race, and of even realising the example of its founder. Life's whole strength was wasted in watching against petty and artificial transgressions, so that none was available for the prosecution of real duty. Yet if deliverance was to come by the law, the

[1] See for a specimen the Kullavaga, v. 21; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx. [2] Bishop of Colombo, in *Nineteenth Century*, July 1888.

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most trivial details of action had to be tried; but here, as elsewhere, by the law was only the knowledge of sin, and that not as an offence against an infinitely Holy One, but only as a misfortune, or at worst an imprudence, a stumbling-block placed by man himself in the way of advancing his interest.

At the close of the rainy season, when the brethren were making ready for their wanderings, another solemn conference for self-purgation was held. In this exercise of the Pâvârana or Invitation no one known to be under the burden of scandal could take part, but all who were consciously clean, from the oldest to the youngest, invited the brethren to name any offence which during their common retreat they might have noted in their conduct. "I invite, venerable ones, the Order; if ye have seen anything offensive on my part, or have heard anything, or have any suspicion about me, have pity upon me, and name it. If I see it, I will make amends."[1] It may be asked whether such an institution as this could ever have flourished in Christendom, although the purest of our Churches might adopt it with profit. These Buddhist brethren could not pray the one for the other, but they could confess their faults one to another by a simpler and more effective method than has ever been attempted by the confessional. That in-

[1] Mahavagga, iv. 1. 18; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii.

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stitution in Christendom has tended more to corrupt and degrade than to purify and elevate society, for it has interfered with the divinely instituted and much more ancient confessional of home. In its secrecy, sealed by affection to father or mother, or brother or sister, can be told out the things that burn within; and no priest or ecclesiastic can usurp this parental or brotherly function without injuring what they must earnestly desire to protect. This confessional, however, of the one to the whole little brotherhood, making them watch for and consider one another, must have tended to mutual edification. It seems of all the observances of the Sangha to have most nearly realised one great purpose of the Church, that of being helpful to each other's salvation. St. Paul and St. James would have felt at home in such a conference. They would probably have warned the brethren against judging one another, and they would have instructed them that only One whose knowledge is perfect, because His love is infinite, could try the lives of men; but they would have commended them for this honest endeavour to fulfil one of the precepts of the perfect law of liberty: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

The part played by woman in the early history

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of Buddhism was analogous to that assumed by woman in relation to primitive Christianity. Women were among the most zealous supporters of Buddha, ministering to him of their substance. Subsequently, as in the case of the Christian Church, the largest proportion of the wealth which was lavished in such marvellous munificence upon the Order came from female votaries. Evidently in those days in India the position of woman was not so degraded and helpless as it afterwards became. Women in old Indian literature are seen to be much more on an equality with men; they are not only represented as receiving scholastic instruction, but even to them as authoresses some of the Vedic hymns were ascribed.[1] At any rate, women appear in almost every Buddhist episode, and they move about with a freedom which contrasts strangely with the seclusion and restraint in which in India they have lived for ages. In the character of Buddha there seems to have been much that was peculiarly attractive to the best type of women, and at least one of these stands forth with very clearly marked individuality.[2] His mother is only a shadow

[1] Weber, *Indische Studien*, x. 118; Metrical translations by Dr. John Muir, p. 250, where Professor Eggeling is quoted.

[2] Mahâ-pagâpati the Gotami, his aunt and nurse (Kullavaga, x. 1) whose entreaty, through Ananda, led him to found the Order of Bikkhuni, seems more than a name. Visâkhâ, "the rich and bountiful," is another type of votary (Mahavagga, viii. 15).

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in the legends, and we can only conjecture what the parent of so good and gentle a man must have been. But his wife confronts us with so much that is womanly in the picture that we feel she must have been drawn from life. Very pathetic and tender is the graphic account of her first interview with him, upon his return as the illustrious Buddha to his father's house.[1] When all came to do him honour, Yasodhara did not come, for she said, "If I am of any value in his eyes, he will come himself, and I can welcome him better here." Buddha, noting her absence, went attended by two of his disciples to the place where she was, and he warned his companions not to prevent her should she seek to embrace him, although no member of the Order could touch or be touched by a woman. And when she saw him, a mendicant in yellow robes, with shaven head and face—though she knew it would be so—she could not contain herself, but fell at his feet, which she held, passionately weeping. Then remembering the great and impassable gulf which he had fixed between them, she rose and stood at his side. His father sought to apologise for her, telling how in the greatness of her love she mourned and afflicted her soul for loss of him, and refused to be comforted. She became his disciple;

[1] *Buddhist Jataka Stories*, translated by Rhys Davids, pp. 87, 90; Bigandet, *Life of Gaudama*, old ed., pp. 156, 168.

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and when afterwards, much against his inclination, he admitted women into a separate branch of the Order, the poor wife, whom he had not only widowed, but had bereft of her only child, "passed into the silent life," as one of the first of Buddhist nuns.

All candid readers of the early Buddhist scriptures will admit that Buddha must not only have been gentle in disposition but pure in character. From male and female disciples alike he demanded chastity, in the Christian conception of the virtue. In the reported discourses of Buddha there is the same absence of direct denunciation of the vices that corrupt society which is observable in the Gospels; but the impression made by the reading of both narratives, is that of characters so far removed from such vices, that people in their presence or under their influence could not even think of them. In both narratives we have presentations of "women who were sinners" in relation to Buddha and Christ, but it will be confessed that the effect produced upon us is very different in each case. The Indian episodes lack the stirrings of the depths of spiritual feeling, the creative word of command exorcising the lust, and unsealing the long congealed fountains of penitence, which confront us so prominently in the scenes of the gospel. Buddha was a pure man, demanding purity from all who would be saved, but demanding it only as moralists

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have demanded it all along. There did not radiate from him that blending of horror of sin and of pity for sinners which makes the influence of Christ upon the wickedness and infirmities of men to be unique in its regenerative power. Had Christ insisted upon purity just as Buddha did, the world would have profited little by the teaching. Unquestionably the mission of Buddha, though intended to make for chastity, has not purified Eastern Asia from the gross and unnatural vices to which all along it has been prone.

For Buddha's conception and estimate of woman was very inferior to that of Christ.[1] She was regarded by him through the medium of the traditional prejudice of her inferiority to man in every respect. To him, as to Plato, women, of all snares which the tempter spreads for man, were the most dangerous. Not only was the very smallest love for them to be destroyed, but they were to be avoided, not to be spoken to, not looked upon,[2] not to be helped even when in distress. Of their future as women in the life hereafter he had no hope,[3] and the only reward which he could hold out to them for obedience or benevolent service, the very

[1] Dhammapada, 284; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x.

[2] Book of the Great Decease, v. 23; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi.

[3] Eitel, *Lectures on Buddhism*, p. 10.

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highest object of aspiration which he could present, was that they might be re-born as men in another stage of existence. His disciple Ananda did good service when he wrung from him permission to form the order of Nuns,[1] for a nun might hope for salvation; but alas for woman and for the progress of society if she had no other gospel to trust in than that which Buddha preached!

His ideal of purity was from the first vitiated by his celibate views of life, and from these views human nature has always revolted in proportion to the honesty with which men have striven to realise them. Celibacy, when dominant or prevalent, has only produced a more vicious and unnatural condition of society than that from which it attempted to escape. The Son of Man represented nobler traditions, and taught far sublimer doctrine. Woman, though different from, and in some respects weaker, is in others higher and purer than man, and altogether his consort. The pure love of the man for the woman was recognised by Christ as one of the most sanctifying influences in life; and marriage, the most sacred of all Divine institutions, as the bond which more than any other keeps society together, obtained His special benediction, and was committed by Him to His Church to guard as the palladium of social freedom and dignity.

[1] Kullavagga, x. 1. 3, 4; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx.

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Notwithstanding its many defections, the Church has never been permitted to lose sight of the Lord's ideal. Even in the days of corrupted faith, when its laudation of virginity was most extravagant, its unmistakable tendency was to acknowledge the true dignity of the wife.[1] A recent writer professes to be unable "to see that Christianity has had any favourable effect on the position of women—on the contrary, it tended rather to lower their character and contract the range of their activities."[2] It is noticeable that his facts or quotations are drawn from a period when asceticism had deeply tainted the Church, and that they cannot be held to represent the tendency of the teaching of Christ. The unmistakable influence of His religion has been to ennoble family relations, and to secure woman in her true position as the companion and helpmeet of man. It has been stated by one who cannot be regarded as a special pleader, that what most differentiates the European from the Hindu branch of the Aryan race, is that the first has steadily carried forward, for the elevation of woman, the series of reforms[3] from which the other, though going a little way, recoiled. No one need fear to assert

[1] Clement of Alexandria gives prominence to the value of marriage and of the family life, *Strom.* vii., *Paedag.* iii. So Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem*, ii. c. 8.

[2] Principal Donaldson, *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1889.

[3] Sir Henry S. Maine, *Early History of Institutions*, p. 341.

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that the chief factor in these reforms, sometimes carried against the resistance and opposition of the Church, was the spirit of Christianity. In proportion as the example of Christ has been honoured, and His teaching has been accepted and obeyed, the emancipation of woman and the recognition of her real rights have been secured. In any case it is certain that the religion of Buddha, though probably not intended to perpetuate the inferior position characteristic of woman in the East, has succeeded neither in lifting her out of it, nor in preventing her from lapsing more deeply into it.

The time for discovering the worth of woman had not come in Buddha's age, and we must remember his antecedents and surroundings before we condemn his estimate of or his relations to her. If the tradition be reliable, he prophesied, upon yielding to Ananda's intercession, that because of women holy living would not long be preserved. They would prove in the fair field of his Order what "the disease of mildew proved to be in a field of rice."[1] So though he admitted them to a separate branch of the Order, he placed them under very stringent regulations, and thoroughly under the tutelage of the monks. "A nun, though admitted a nun a hundred years ago, must bow reverentially before a monk, though only admitted

[1] Kullavagga, x. 1. 6.

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to-day." She must not pass the rainy season in a district in which monks were not residing; she must report herself twice a month to the Sangha for confession and instruction; she must give the Pavâranâ invitation, and she must, if guilty of offence, atone for it before both monks and nuns. She could only be admitted after a two years' novitiate; under no circumstances must she revile or rebuke a monk; yea, on no occasion whatever must she charge him with any offence.[1] Between them and the superior sex the strictest separation was maintained from the first. The brother who was to teach and exhort them was never allowed to enter their nunnery, unless a sister was very ill. For a monk to journey alone with a nun, to cross a river in the same boat with one, to sit alone with a nun, with or without witnesses, was a very grave offence.[2] In short, in the Buddhist Sangha women were only tolerated at the best, and they were very severely guarded and restrained, as creatures not at all calculated to influence any one for good, and who could only be prevented or tamed from doing mischief or harm.[3]

[1] Kullavagga, x. 1. 27.

[2] Pâtimokkha; Pakittiyâ Dhammâ, 6, 7, 27, 66, 67.

[3] "You are not, O monks, to bow down before women, to rise up in their presence, to stretch out your joined hands towards them, nor to perform towards them those duties that are proper to them (from an inferior to a superior)."—Kullavagga, x. 3. 1. "Giving honour unto the

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The Sangha, as a brotherhood and sisterhood leading a celibate life, coupled with abstinence from labour and from active services of charity, was simply vicious in its tendency, and it proved one of the most obstinate hindrances to the realisation of Buddha's best ideas, and one of the most powerful factors in the degradation of his religion. Human nature was too strong to submit to such artificial restrictions; so very early there gathered around him and his monks many who would not abandon their families and their callings, though they took refuge in Buddha, and proved the reality of their devotion by faithful service of the Order and practice of the Law. These were the votaries, "upasaka" (masc.), "upasika" (fem.), corresponding with the lay associates of the great Mendicant Orders of Christendom. Converted to the observance of the precepts, they could only, as long as they continued in the world, be sustained by a very faint and far-off hope of deliverance. Theoretically they might attain to sainthood, and from "this shore" of common life, in most exceptional cases they might "pass across the dominion of death," and reach to the other shore.[1] The father of Buddha is said to have done so on his deathbed, and another is recorded in

wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of God."—1 Peter iii. 1-7.

[1] Dhammapada, 85, 86; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x.

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the legends as having gained Nirvana.[1] As a rule, however, it was reckoned impossible for them to gain what was considered as so barely possible for the Order of Mendicants, that only one or two even of them did actually gain it here. Pious votaries, however, could hope for a happy re-birth, and for strength of merit to be acquired; in some hereafter sufficient to enable them eventually to pluck the fruit of Nirvana. For such lay associates no ceremony of initiation was required; only in presence of a monk the candidates made profession that they took refuge in Buddha and Dharma and Sangha. They had to observe certain precepts and prohibitions; had to renounce any trade involving the making or selling of arms, or the killing of animals; they had to abstain from all traffic in and use of intoxicating drinks, and to put far away from them all falsehood, and theft, and unchastity. To seal this, however, no formal vow was demanded of the votary, and to maintain them in their obedience no pastoral supervision was accorded. When they transgressed, even in the matter of scandalous living, there was neither censure nor discipline, and when they offended by injuring the Order or insulting one of its members, the only penalty inflicted was the refusal of their invitations to dine, and the withdrawal from them of

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Handbook of Buddhism*, p. 125; Spence Hardy, *Eastern Monachism*, p. 199.

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the alms-bowl.[1] Into the Uposatha assemblies they dared not intrude, and from the very slightest share of the business of the Order they were strictly excluded.[2] They could only listen to the preaching of the monks, whom they could feed, and lodge, and endow with houses and lands; and all the reward they could hope for, was the prospect of acquiring in some future life merit sufficient to enable them to renounce the world and become mendicants like them. For the present they were not inside, but only about, the circle of the Sakkya-putta-Samanas; he was not a member of the family, but only a servitor and a slave.[3] The elect, the disciples in deed and in truth, the heirs of salvation, were exclusively the monks; and the Upâsaka at the best was one for whom it was good "continuously to dispense rice milk, and honey lumps, if he had a longing for joy, whether he desired heavenly joy or coveted only human prosperity."[4] His merit was most likely to be acquired by being useful to the good, who served him by accepting his offerings,[5] and taught him—though to a purpose undreamed

[1] The bowl was "turned down" in relation to him, and his house became an unlawful resort.—Kullavagga, v. 20. 3; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx.

[2] Sir Monier Williams states that though votaries did not confess to monks, the four days were observed by them.—*Buddhism*, p. 84.

[3] Oldenberg, *Buddha, etc.*, p. 162 note.

[4] Mahavagga, vi. 24. 1-6.

[5] Kullavagga, vi. 1-5; *ibid.* vi. 4. 10.

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of by St. Paul when he quoted his Saviour's saying —that in his case, at least, it was "more blessed to give than to receive."

It is to the lasting honour of Buddha that he converted the Sangha into a propaganda for preaching to all his way of salvation. He did not, for he could not, conceive of that better society which our Lord has created in the Holy Catholic Church. It is true, alas! that the actual or visible Church has often caricatured, and has never yet properly represented, its Lord's ideal; but it has never been permitted wholly to lose sight of that Kingdom whose citizenship is free to all who believe and repent, and of that royal priesthood of which all are members who trust in the one sacrifice and prevailing intercession of the Great High Priest of our profession. If the visible Church has failed to convert, or even to attract, the members of the Buddhist Sanghas, it is because of something wrong in its methods, or false in its presentation; for notwithstanding its failure, it possesses in the great gospel of the Divine Fatherhood intrusted to its keeping, potentialities for gathering all mankind into the only brotherhood which will satisfy their heaven-born aspirations. The manifestation of it may still be a far-off Divine event, and to bring it about God may employ many agencies other than those which the Church as at present organised may be

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willing to recognise or to use; but once that holy brotherhood is manifested, He alone will be found at the head of it, who on His way to His agony, and to the cross on which He was to reveal to the uttermost the love of the Creator for the human race, paused by the brook Kedron, and made this supplication mingle with the ripple of its waters and the whispers of the olives of Gethsemane, "I pray . . . that they all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us."

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LECTURE VI.

THE TWO RELIGIONS IN HISTORY.

I.—External Diffusion.

In His apostles, and the disciples who gathered round them, endowed with the memory of His words and deeds, two simple sacraments, and a promise that He would be with them to the end of the æon, while they fulfilled His commission to evangelise and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the continuance of the Church which our Lord had founded was secured. Buddha left behind him neither sacrament to signify and seal the benefits which he had conferred, nor any promise of personal fellowship with or interest in his followers; but he was survived by the Monastic Order which he had founded, by a law containing the essentials of his system, and a form of discipline containing the customs to be observed in their assemblies, and the rules to which all the brethren were to be

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subject. Though the personal guide to Nirvana was lost to them, they still in the law possessed his way to it, and by observing the law, and following his way, they would fulfil his last stirring exhortation,[1] "Be ye lamps unto yourselves, be ye a refuge to yourselves, O monks."

So much importance being attached to the law, his disciples, immediately after his decease, according to the tradition, set about collecting the materials of it, in his remembered discourses, decisions, and in all that he said; and this labour of recalling, determining, and perpetuating his teaching seems to have occupied them for several generations. There is no trace of any corresponding anxiety on the part of the Christian Church to collect the words of the Lord Jesus. The Gospels are not the earliest of our scriptures, and they were produced more for the edification of Jewish and Gentile converts, than to secure for the Church a standard of belief and of discipline. The function of the Church was not so much to recall and perpetuate the teaching of its Lord as to interpret the significance of His life, and death, and resurrection. No written or remembered instructions were required, for the apostles believed that they had Himself to tell them on every occasion what they should do and teach. From the very first they

[1] Mahâparanibhâna Sutta, ii. 33. 35.

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prayed to Him in full assurance that He heard and answered them. They believed that He had shown Himself to some of them, and that He was witnessed for in all of them by a new possession. The Gentile world had been familiar with the *μανία* of the medium through whom a Divine oracle was supposed to be given, and with the *rabies* of the howling priests of the goddess Cybele, but the Christians professed to be inspired by the *πνεῦμα ἅγιον*. In some instances this inspiration manifested itself in extravagant forms and in mysterious utterances,[1] but those who were most under its control had complete possession of themselves; their speech was intelligible, and sober, and most convincing, making "manifest the secrets of the heart."

Unquestionably this belief in the presence of Christ in the Spirit—whether truly founded or not—was universal in the Church. All the utterances of primitive Christianity, the scriptures of its apostles, the treatises of its fathers and doctors, and all the monuments of the first ages, bear witness not to a Christ who once lived and had died, but who was living triumphant and glorified, reigning for them, and in them to reign. Unquestionably also in this belief was the hiding of that power which enabled the Church to confront the whole world, endure the full weight of its persecutions, and

[1] 1 Corinthians xiv.

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finally win the victory over it. It also explains the appearance in the Church, from the first, of that succession of persons who, because of their strongly marked individualities, gave both direction and impetus to its progress. Buddhism, though both its southern and northern scriptures record a patriarchal succession, and though probably not deficient in highly cultured disciples, seems to have lacked from the very first men who had genius to organise or intellect to command its forces. Its own early writings disclose a movement which very speedily congealed, because ruled only by a remembered law, interpreted by very adulterated traditions. Christianity represents quite a different movement; it was not the perpetuation of a system, but the development of a new inspiration, of a life manifested in Christ and communicated to all who believed on Him. Consequently it never was without its heroes, whom it had the power to produce; and consequently also it never could stiffen into a tradition, for where its leaders attempted to fix it, in either confession or in ritual, it was sure to evade them. It has been appropriately described as "the most changeable of religions,"[1]—mutable in its forms, immutable in its essence. For Christianity is not a system either of philosophy or theology;

[1] "Das Christenthum ist das allerveränderlichste; das ist sein besonderer Ruhm."—Rothe, *Stille Stunden*, p. 357.

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it is a perpetually reforming spirit, fed by faith in One who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Both religions entered the world as missionaries bent upon its conversion, and though Buddhism was afterwards to eclipse Christianity in the superficial extent of its conquests, the annals of the primitive Church record a much more rapid extension. The early development of Christianity, even taking into account the circumstances which helped or facilitated its progress, remains one of the marvels of history. In the New Testament the Church is seen to have gained a footing almost wherever the waves of the Diaspora had reached. St. Paul found Christians not only in Rome, but in little Puteoli, and his letters imply that there were churches in Spain and in southern Gaul. St. Peter wrote from Babylon to a wide circle of Christian communities gathered out of the regions of Asia Minor.[1] There seem to have been even then churches in most of the chief cities, and in a multitude of minor towns all over the Empire; and there is no reason to distrust the tradition, that before the last of the apostles fell asleep, the gospel had called multitudes living far beyond the bounds of the Empire to make good their citizenship in the kingdom of God.

The churches may have been small in respect

[1] Acts xxviii. 13; Rom. xv. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 10; 1 Peter i. 1.

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of membership, for the rapid diffusion of Christianity by no means involved the conversion *en masse* of the people. Facts will hardly bear out the glowing testimony of Gregory Thaumaturgus, who found in the populous metropolis of a large province only seventeen Christians, and in twenty-five years reported that he could find only seventeen heathens.[1] With Gibbon we may have to discount as "splendid exaggeration" the testimony of Tertullian, "Hesterni sumus, et vestra omnia implevimus." Still the direct testimony of Tacitus as to the multitude of Christians in Rome, the evidence of the Catacombs, and many other indications, point to the conclusion that the rapid numerical increase of Christians was as singular as was the territorial diffusion of their religion. The whole Empire must have been sensibly leavened, and the converts must for long have been gathered from other than the lower classes of society, before the conversion of Constantine became possible. Emperors—even Roman ones—follow in such matters, and do not lead their subjects; and so we may be sure what had at first been glad tidings to the slaves and the poor must for some time have become the consolation of many a noble Pudens and Linus, and of many a Claudia of royal descent, before it could be recognised as the religion of the State.[2]

[1] Greg. Nyss. *Op.* iii. 574. [2] Keim, *Rom und Christenthum*, p. 417.

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Many circumstances undoubtedly contributed to this result. A consolidated empire, with nearly all the representative nations fused into a union, comprising all the existing elements of culture and forces of civilisation; the great Roman highways, with means of easy communication so abundant as to be surprising to us; the widespread understanding of the two leading languages, making virtually of one speech a great section of the most important part of the world; the innumerable communities of Jews, everywhere tolerated, and "cutting channels through the adamantine mass of heathen society," [1] immensely aided the missionary activities of the apostles and their followers. Moreover, the moral and religious condition of the Empire, the bankruptcy of the old faith, the despair and confusion and perplexity of people, everywhere seeking mightier or better deities than they knew, everywhere trembling "between the two immensities of terror," rendered possible the victory of Christianity. Multitudes were thus prepared to welcome a Deliverer who had come in the name, not of Jupiter Maximus Tonans, but of the Father in heaven, to give peace in this world's tribulations, and sure hope of joy in the world beyond it.[2] And yet all this, even when added to

[1] Uhlhorn, *Conflict of Christianity*, pp. 54, 90.

[2] Neander, *Church History*, vol. i. pp. 10, 40.

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Gibbon's five causes, will not account for the historical puzzle, that a faith, originating in a manger in a Syrian cattle-shed, brooded over for thirty years of a life of poverty and toil, preached for three, with the result of being almost universally rejected, and quenched to all appearance in the blood of crucifixion, should immediately after the death of its Founder have broken out all over the Roman world. Converting its agents from farms, and harbours, and prisons, it called them to martyrdom; for it sent them—poor "weavers, and shoemakers, and fullers, and illiterate clowns"—to proclaim "barbarous dogmas," and "extravagant hopes," "universally detested" by Jew and Gentile, and to bear the full weight of a prolonged series of persecutions involving indescribable tortures and disgrace.[1] Yet somehow it never paused for a moment, never abated one iota of its claim, till in the course of a few generations it was found upon the throne. We never will explain this wonder by showing how, as a system of ethics, or as a new theory of life, it found the condition of the world favourable to its reception. The correlation of the state of the world to the new faith has been claimed as providential,—an indication of a Divine purpose making all things work together, for this

[1] Orig. *cont. Cels.* iii. 44-54; Tatian, c. 33; Minut. Felix, *Octav.* 8. 12; Tertull. *Apolog.* 37 *et passim.*

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manifestation of a new power or principle of life in society, which as yet has had no historical counterpart.[1]

The early scriptures of Buddhism, though preserving a tradition that in twelve years from the time in which the doctrine was first preached it had spread over sixteen kingdoms, disclose no such rapidity of diffusion. The kingdoms referred to are not to be regarded as kingdoms in our sense of the word, for in extent and influence they would not equal a German principality, and were probably only tribal communities. After the death of Buddha the many Sanghas that had arisen seem to have suffered for lack of a central governing power. If his Order is to be called a Church, it had manifestly no church-government. It had synods, and assemblies, and councils, but not one with the authority of an Œcumenical as representative of the whole. It was more Congregational than Presbyterian in its constitution, and for this very reason it was weak when compared with the compact organisation of Brahmanism, with which it competed for supremacy. Disorder and dissension are traceable in it from the first, and the early texts, though containing many admonitions against schism, warnings that offences must come, and woes upon those who would cause them, record no practical steps to

[1] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 460 *seq.*

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prevent or remedy them.[1] Vigorous expansion was consequently not to be looked for, and for two centuries we may safely infer that Buddhism represented only a struggling sect, which, beyond the limits in which it was first preached, had made little, if indeed any, progress.

At the close of this period, when its literature was reaching a canonical form, and its manuals of discipline and common order were generally in use, it found its Constantine in the conqueror Chandragupta. In opposition to the Brahmans, who despised him for his low-caste origin, he seems to have lifted it from obscurity into the sunshine of really imperial favour. His grandson Asoka, who consolidated his conquests, proved its Theodosius, in not only greatly endowing it, but in establishing its supremacy. There were no quarrels between him and the Sanghas as to their independence, as afterwards between the Emperors and the Popes, for, like a true son of the Church, he acknowledged their authority. By obeying in appearance, he in reality became, what Buddhism since the death of its founder sorely needed, the head of the system, and under his wise and energetic rule, the religion emerged into a vigour which it was to maintain for centuries.

[1] Kullavagga, iv. 14. 25; also *ibid.* vii. 1. 5; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx.

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An earnest Buddhist, he seems to have been something better. He called himself Pryadarsi,[1] the "beloved of the gods," and a Daniel indeed he appears to have been, raised up for the blessing of millions. His edicts—stone inscriptions found all over India—the first written testimonies which Buddhism left of itself,[2] all breathe a lofty spirit of righteousness and kindness and toleration, appealing to both Brahman and Buddhist, and commending themselves at this day, "to Jew and Christian and Moslem alike, as part of the universal religion of humanity."[3] One of them refers to a council which he assembled at Patna, for the pacification and reformation of the Order. During its session the ancient collections of rules and dogmas were rehearsed, and as the list is considerably shorter than the contents of the Tripitaka, we may be sure that the Southern tradition that Buddha himself was the author of all the books comprising that collection has no foundation in fact.[4] A far more momentous act of this ancient council than the recension of the canon, was that of establishing the first great Buddhist missions. To a revived and

[1] E. Burnouf, *Science of Religions*, p. 288, notes the analogy between Pryadarsi and "a man greatly beloved" in Daniel ix. 23.

[2] See *Lotus de la bonne Loi*, App. x. p. 659 *seq.*: Prinsep's trans., *Jour. Asiat. Soc. Beng.* vol. vii. pp. 219 *seq.*; Prof. H. H. Wilson's, vol. xii. of *Jour. Asiat. Soc. Beng.* pp. 153 *seq.*

[3] Wheeler, *History of India*, vol. iii. p. 214.

[4] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Handbook of Buddhism*, p. 225.

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reformed Order the suggestion of the pious king, that they should go forth and fulfil their great teacher's original commission, was welcome. Their dissensions, as has often happened in Christendom, were due to their living to themselves. An army inactive in quarters, is more likely to quarrel or mutiny than one in service in the field. These good Buddhists wisely determined to carry the war of deliverance beyond them, and so into the Punjab, Kashmir, the Central Himalayan regions, over into the Malay Peninsula, went the missionaries, armed only with the words of the Law or the legends which had been floating round the memory of their master, and supported only by the offerings put into their alms-dish, to gain whatever victories they could in the fair conflict of reason with reason.[1]

In India they would of course be supported by imperial influence, and indeed the mission to Ceylon, headed by Mahinda, the son of Asoka, seems to have been accredited by royal embassy; but nowhere was Buddhism propagated as Islam subsequently was by Mohammed, or as Christianity was by Charlemagne, with an army at its back. Races ever ready to credit the supernatural would probably be more easily won by the wonders which were then being formulated in reference to Buddha; but whatever be the explanation of it, the success of these mis-

[1] Dipavamso, chap. viii.

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sionaries anticipated that of the apostles. In Ceylon there was founded a Sangha, which was destined to nurse and preserve the original creed in somewhat of its purity, when all the others betrayed and corrupted it. Surviving several changes of dynasty, that Sangha, 330 years after Buddha's decease, is said to have reduced its canon to writing. The result has been somewhat contradictory to the theory, that it matters very little whether a canon be oral or written, for Southern Buddhism, having an authority to which it was thus earlier anchored, has held more closely to the original system, from which, having no such check for long, every section of Northern Buddhism has irrecoverably fallen away.

After the death of Asoka, the empire which he sought to consolidate by the preaching of the Law fell to pieces, and Buddhism was destined to be tested by more than one rude shock. A Brahman reaction took place, which is even supposed to have resulted in the persecution of all Buddhists living in India. If so, it was the first which the religion encountered—so unlike Christianity, which had to endure for three centuries the fierce assaults of its enemies. Persecution by a religion so tolerant as Brahmanism is hard to conceive, but if it took place at this period, it only tended, as in the early Christian trials, to the wider expansion of the persecuted faith. "They that were scattered abroad went every-

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where preaching" the Law. Some of them pushed through Afghanistan into the regions of Central Asia, and there, just as Ulphilas and Severinus, centuries later, gained a hold over the wild races that conquered the moribund Empire, so Buddhist missionaries succeeded in sowing the seeds of their Law among the rude Scythian tribes, who were then in great commotion in their vast inland steppes. Driven from their ancestral homes, a branch of the great tribe of Huns about 160 B.C. overthrow the Bactrian kingdom, and after generations of struggle they conquered Kashmir, the Punjab, and a considerable part of India. Then just as the Goths and Huns, in the moment of their conquest of Rome, tendered their submission to Christianity, so the conversion of Kaniska, the greatest of the Indo-Scythian kings, a contemporary with Augustus and Antony, enabled Buddhism to enter with fresh vigour upon a second period of very brilliant supremacy.[1]

Though the difference between the Northern and Southern Buddhists was already showing itself, and though soon after it manifested itself in a divergence as complete as that which sundered the Greek Orthodox from the Latin Catholic Churches, monumental evidence, harmonising with that derived from its own literary relics, indicates that for four or five centuries after this Buddhism was

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Handbook of Buddhism*, p. 259.

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most successfully propagated almost everywhere save in India. In the land of its origin it was gradually declining, because drawing nearer to the Brahmanism from which it had seceded. Fa-Hian in the end of the fourth century, though describing it as dominant everywhere, found the place of its nativity only a wilderness.[1] Later on, the viharas were deserted, the dagobas in ruins, "the monks were few, the heretics many," and by the seventh century the process of assimilation with and absorption into Hinduism was in India, save in widely separated and remote localities, almost complete. What it lost in India, however, it was to gain in other directions. Its greatest conquest was in China. In the days of Asoka eighteen missionaries are said to have reached China, where they are held in reverence to this day, their images occupying a conspicuous place in every temple. The faith which they introduced seemed to have struggled with very little success to gain a footing till about A.D. 68.[2] Thirteen years before this date, in obedience to a vision which appeared to him at Troas, St. Paul brought Christianity from Asia to Europe. On the thirtieth day of the twelfth Chinese month in A.D. 68, the Emperor Mingti, in consequence of a

[1] *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, trans. by Prof. Beal, vol. i.; Fo-Kwo-ki, chap. xxii. p. xlix, vol. ii.; Hiuen Tsiang, B. vi. pp. 13, 14.

[2] Lassen, *Indische Alterth.* vol. ii. p. 1078; vol. iv. p. 741.

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dream, sent ambassadors to the distant West for Buddhist monks and manuscripts.[1] Travelling in almost royal state, the invited missionaries were accorded in China a welcome in marvellous contrast to the reception of the Christian apostle in the first colonial city he had reached. From this time onwards a perpetual succession of monks and manuscripts entered China; yet, though tolerated from the first, and often royally patronised, centuries elapsed before it succeeded in winning a place as one of the three religions of China, while Christianity, persecuted from the first, succeeded after a fierce struggle in conquering the Empire of Rome, and then by a long process in evangelising Europe.

The conversion of the most of Eastern Asia was the work of the Northern or more corrupt Buddhism. Southern Buddhism, like the orthodox Eastern Church, which contented itself with its evangelistic achievements among the Goths, and its Nestorian missions, soon exhausted its propagative force. The introduction of the religion into Burma, Siam, and the adjacent kingdoms, may be said to sum up its triumphs. Northern Buddhism, on the other hand, ran from the beginning of our era a course of unchecked triumphs. In the close of the

[1] Dr. Beal, *Buddhism in China*, p. 51; Dr. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, Preface, p. i.

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fourth century it spread from China to Corea, and in the sixth it reached Japan. Previous to this it entered the isolated regions of Tibet, more welcomed than resisted by the demonolatrous inhabitants on account of the adulterated form in which it presented itself. There, after a struggle for some two centuries, it succeeded, about the period when Islam was beginning its conquests elsewhere, in securing strong royal support. After experiencing for many generations the vicissitudes of popularity and persecution, the conquests of Genghiz, and the strong favour of Kublai, his greatest successor, established its hierarchy as supreme, and in spite of changes of dynasty, it has there dominated the whole relations of life in a manner like unto, but to an extent far beyond, the wildest dreams of Rome's most ambitious Pope.[1]

It thus appears that Buddhism in the second period of its history, and after it had succeeded in winning the support of powerful kings, reached its furthest extension and achieved its grandest conquests. Christianity, on the other hand, was more rapidly diffused in the primitive than in the subsequent ages. Tested by its intensive hold upon the nations, it had only nominally converted the Roman Empire by the end of the fourth century. Gibbon's estimate of the number of Christians within

[1] *Buddhism in Tibet*, E. Schlagintweit, pp. 61-75.

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it, is acknowledged by friendly authorities,[1] like Bishop Lightfoot, to err if at all on the side of excess. During the reign of Constantine, probably not a twentieth of the whole population of the Empire were Christians, even by profession. After this period, no doubt, the proportion must have greatly increased, for the barbarous hordes that poured downwards in successive deluges over the South were converted so suddenly and so silently that "scarce a legend remains to tell the tale." In regard, however, to the conversion of heathen Europe, it is a mistake to suppose that the missionaries had only to come, and see, and conquer. The conversion of England by the Roman monks, and of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales by Oriental and, it is said, Arian missionaries, cannot be said to have been accomplished before the close of the seventh century. Afterwards, the conversion of Central and Northern Germany occupied the Celtic and British missionaries for two centuries. The conversion of the Scandinavians, beginning in the ninth, could not be said to have been effected till the middle of the eleventh century, while that of Slavonia, undertaken in the tenth, did not terminate, if indeed even then, before the sixteenth century. The conquest of Europe was the result of a prolonged and often desultory warfare, in which, while the

[1] *Comparative Progress of Ancient and Modern Missions.*

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advance was slow, Christianity sometimes failed to hold the ground which it had gained. The powerful Churches in Asia, the seats of its great Councils and the capitals of its rule, either died or were swept away; Antioch and Constantinople, once its citadels, became the strongholds of an alien and hostile faith; the mighty Churches of Egypt and Abyssinia dwindled into a condition of immedicable disease, and the flourishing Church of Africa, with its more than six hundred bishoprics, was simply, because ripe for destruction, obliterated by the forces of Islam. Toward the latter half of the tenth century it seemed as if Christianity in Europe was surely following the fate of Buddhism before its disappearance from India. On all sides it was pressed in the deadly grip of Pagan and Moslem alike, while its bishops, and priests, and nobles, oblivious of the danger, were living in sinful self-indulgence. It seemed as if Christendom was being surely blotted out from the geography of the world; and yet as by a miracle it survived, or was preserved, till came the Renaissance, and that marvellous emergence of missionary zeal, which sent Christianity, Reformed and Unreformed, to the very ends of the earth, and which, increasing in every generation since then, was never more abundant nor more fervent than now.[1]

[1] Dr. Maclear, *Gradual Conversion of Europe*, pp. 6-12.

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Christianity, unlike Buddhism, came very early into collision with the most advanced civilisation and highest culture of the world, while Buddhism for centuries encountered only the religions of inferior peoples. The only equal or superior civilisation which it met was that of China, and there, though tolerated and even patronised from the first, it seems for centuries to have been regarded as an exotic. Natives of India, like the Jews in the Roman Empire, were allowed to build Buddhist temples, but only in the fourth century A.D. did Chinese people begin extensively to be converted to the Buddhist religion. As it rose into favour its conflicts with the Confucianists began, and the issue of its varied fortunes has been, that though indirectly it has greatly influenced, it has only subdued a section of the Chinese people.[1] While other inferior races came quickly under its influence, the most civilised of Eastern peoples resisted it, and have at most only been leavened by it.[2] Christianity had also its easy conquests, as when some northern tribes were converted in a day by the baptism of their chiefs; but its principal struggle with the historic Paganism of aristocratic Rome was fierce and obdurate. There the position, as in the case of Hinduism to-day, was not carried by assault, but

[1] *Nouveau Journ. Asiat.* pp. 106, 137, 139.

[2] Dr. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 84, 207.

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by slow and almost imperceptible approaches. The Church at Rome for two centuries was more a Greek than a Latin one. The names of its bishops were Greek, and the Catacomb inscriptions sufficiently indicate that Greek was the language of its members. Slowly and indirectly, however, it gained the hold upon ancient thought and custom, operating like an alterative in the system, supplanting what was good, by simply taking possession of it and inspiring it with a new life, while that which was decaying and waxing old gradually vanished away.

In this respect, therefore, there is a significant difference between the two religions. Christianity, with all the world against it, and in spite of three centuries of unparalleled persecutions, succeeded in vanquishing the highest, while yet approving itself as a gospel to the lowest civilisation. Buddhism, with the greatest powers of the Eastern world in its favour, and never, perhaps, save in China, called to bear the shock of a single persecution, has only succeeded in being accepted by inferior branches of the human race. The Hindu Aryans, assimilating what of it they approved, rejected what of it was peculiar and distinctive. The Semitic followers of Islam simply crushed it under foot, and it never rose high enough even to touch the Western Aryans.[1]

[1] "It may be safely asserted that no Aryan race, while existing in anything like purity, was ever converted to Buddhism, or could permanently

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Very early it withdrew itself entirely within the circles of the Turanian peoples; and if to-day in Mongolia, Manchuria, among the Kalmucs on the Wolga, and the Bunjads on the shores of the Baikal Sea, it may be said to be advancing, the most competent authorities assure us that everywhere else its progress is arrested, and that, even where it is most upheld by local governments, in the regions of its most dominant supremacy, it yields manifest signs of decay.[1]

Another and even more significant contrast is found in the fact that the advance of Christianity has ever been furthest and most rapid when its faith was purely taught and most consistently illustrated. It never sought peace with other religions without being defeated, and never allied itself with superstition without bringing shame and disaster on all concerned. It has had its periods of deterioration and defection, but somehow it has always

adopt its doctrines."—Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 57. The old Turanian race, far from being savage, or even barbarous, not only laid the basis of Chinese civilisation, but seems to have been also the first civiliser of Western Asia, and the first to spread art and science along the southern coasts of Europe. The Iberian, Etruscan, Phœnician, Hittite, even Egyptian monuments, are now acknowledged to be relics of this mighty race, which must have sent horde after horde over Asia and Europe long before the historic advance westwards in the thirteenth century A.D.; its latest invasion of India may have been represented, not by Scythian ancestors of Buddha, but the Sikhs.—Conder, "Early Races of Western Asia," *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.* August 1889, pp. 30-43.

[1] Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, Introduction; Eitel, *Lectures on Buddhism*.

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survived them. Indeed, its vitality is as truly indicated by the corruptions which it has outlived, as by the external opposition which it has vanquished. Its real conquests are due to the expansive power of its inherent and original principles. The very opposite is the case with Buddhism. Its fundamental principles being unnatural and repugnant to the essential instincts of mankind, it was from the very first a morbid growth, having in it the seeds of decay. It never could have lived in the strength of its own principles, and so the story of its advance is one of perpetual compromise with every popular superstition that it met. The more it assimilated itself to them, the more it seemed to grow; but as foreign influences took possession of it, its own life oozed out of it, till very early it represented a system so perverted that its founder would have repudiated and abhorred it. The Church has often travestied Christianity, but it never fell from the faith so fearfully as Buddhism has everywhere fallen from the original doctrine of Buddha. Religion, worship, even the purest, he intended by his system to supersede, and now his name is employed to support the grossest of all superstitions,[1] a religion with more idols in it than that of the most idolatrous of peoples, a worship founded on the efficacy of magical incantations, and of prayers

[1] Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, pp. 114, 156.

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rendered by machines. Just for this very reason its

II.—INTERNAL HISTORY

is very instructive, and we shall now proceed to consider a few of its most salient points.

Buddhism, in a quiet land and tranquil age, was launched upon the world as a new theory of life—a system so rounded off and completed that its disciples had no other duty than that of believing, obeying, and propagating it. Christianity, on the other hand, began its career amid the convulsions of political revolution, and for three centuries of conflict it had to fight every inch of its way. It was not, however, as a new system that it appeared in history, but as a new principle of life, round which all the moral, and spiritual, and intellectual energies which it found in mankind, and all which itself might awaken, might form and gather strength. It was impossible, therefore, that it ever could remain stationary. Its apostles were commissioned to carry on all that their Lord had "begun both to do and to teach." He distinctly promised them increase of knowledge and power from on high, and all the changes which increase or growth implies. To-day His religion could no more be made to return to the form in which it was manifested eighteen centuries ago than man could be made to put on the clothes of his childhood. Its de-

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velopment, however, is that of its inherent life, manifesting all the continuity and identity of the sapling with the tree, of the boy with the man. Like all growing things, it has been subject to disease by contagion and infection, but it has always preserved life in sufficient volume to slough off its impurities and to pass onward through reformation to health. Now, the history of Buddhism, on the contrary, reveals only a long process of degradation, without having manifested any power as yet to recover and to reform itself according to its original and essential principles.[1]

The offspring of Brahmanism, from which it differed more in degree than in substance, at no period of its history did it succeed in completely disentangling itself from it. Not only did the forms of the old religion cling to it; its very life was continued in the new. While Buddha rejected all the sacrificial rites and religious observances of Brahmanism, and preached a law subversive of all its faith in revelation, he accepted and continued its ascetism and its hope of deliverance by a process of meditation and of abstraction. It was by himself, therefore, and not by his cousin Dêvadatta,[2] that the heretic leaven was introduced into the lump.

[1] Wassilief, *Le Bouddhisme, etc.*, pp. 14, 18.

[2] Dêvadatta's Five Points (Kullavagga, vii. 3. 14, 15) all insist upon a more ascetic rule than the Sangha practised.

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Dêvadatta's attempted changes were not innovations, but a return to the primitive rule, a logical deduction from a law which Gotama never wholly rejected. Just as to the patriarchs of the Greek, the Western or Romish Church "is the chief heresy of latter days," just as the Pope was branded in their Encyclical of 1848 "as the first founder of German Rationalism,"[1] so the successive advances and orthodox decisions of the Buddhist Councils were denounced as apostasies by men like Dêvadatta. Still these changes were due in great measure to the beliefs which Buddhism had inherited, for when in the inevitable rebound from its unnatural Nihilism the theistic movement set in, the spirit of Brahmanism, which had passed into it at the first, began to assert itself, and, interpenetrating it more and more, prepared it for that issue in which, blending with the popular forms in which Brahmanism was then expressing itself, Buddhism merged into the composite system of Hinduism which confronts us in India to-day.

In Christianity, as in nature, the grafting of the good stock upon the wild conquered the wild. Christ took nothing from Judaism but the universalism of its prophets, its faith in one living and true God, the Heavenly Father of multitudes whom Abraham was ignorant of, and Israel did not ac-

[1] Stanley, *Eastern Church*, pp. 45, 50.

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knowledge. His apostles, judged by the literature which they have bequeathed, seem faithfully to have carried out His principles; but many of their converts were strict Jews, who insisted upon some visible connection with the old religion. Just as Dêvadatta, their prototype, held that a true Buddhist must first be a good Brahman in respect of asceticism, so they insisted that Christians were debtors to keep what of the old law was expressed in circumcision, and the observance of certain other commandments and ordinances. The danger of Christianity being reduced to the bondage of the old was serious, but the inspiration of St. Paul, the providential destruction of the nation, and the marvellous spread of the religion among the Gentiles, eventually overcame it. The spirit of Judaism, it is true, has never been wholly cast out from the Christian Church. All through its history it is traceable in one form or another of the ritualism and asceticism which, like Brahmanism, it may be held to represent. There have been times when it has attained to portentous and pernicious influence, and such times may happen again; but from the early days there has always been in Christianity vitality sufficient to detect and try and condemn it; and so though Judaism, and even Paganism, to some extent, still taint the theology and worship of the Church, we need have no fear that the genius

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of the old religion will ever gain, as it did in the case of Buddhism, permanent ascendency over the new.

The opposite of Ritualism and Asceticism, represented by Judaism and Brahmanism, is the Rationalism which such reforming religions may be said to beget of themselves; and if its spirit of inquiry be uncontrolled, it will certainly dissipate their energy. As early as St. Paul's day we see Rationalism working upon the development of Christianity, and necessitating the rise of a theology, which, perhaps inevitably, has often been confounded with, and, in the estimation of many, has supplanted the Christian religion. The many sects which Rationalism produced in the first centuries do not so much indicate hostility to the new faith, as the mighty ferment through which the minds of men were passing in regard to it. Now though Buddhist scriptures manifest rationalistic movements in the Sanghas from the first, they seem to have proceeded in quite a different direction. Of conflict as to fundamentals of creed there appears to be very little trace, but there are abundant indications of considerable controversy as to practice. The first quarrel traceable in the Christian Church arose over the peculiar institution of community of goods; and though the Sanghas avoided that mistake, their earliest troubles were concerning

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the possession of property. The original rule enjoined upon the brethren absolute poverty, and the regulations in regard to food and shelter were equally stringent. Very soon after Buddha's decease a reaction set in, and a feeling began to prevail that his standard of morality and his ideal of the Order were too lofty for all but exceptional men to realise. He may have succeeded as the fully Enlightened One, but common men could not hope to "wind themselves so high;" so out of consideration for human infirmity there commenced a constant and increasing relaxation in their interpretation of his precepts of perfection.[1] The law of absolute poverty was modified to the extent that property might be held in common, and the laws regulating diet, dress, and even meditation, were soon subjected to the same treatment. The wealth which poured in upon them, and the consequent improvement of their position, was not followed by corresponding spiritual growth. The more they prospered, the more the fundamental principles of the Order were neglected, evaded, or explained away. The friendly conferences of the rainy season gave place to controversy, and controversy proved so fruitful of schism, that very early in its career Buddhism is said to have

[1] Turnour, "Pali Bud. Annals," *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng.* vol. vi. p. 729; Wassilief, *Le Bouddhisme, etc.*, p. 18.

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produced eighteen different sects, ranged in four great divisions. Yet in no one schism seemed there a great principle to be involved; they were but Pharisee quarrels at best, in which though they strained out the gnat they swallowed the camel.[1]

Side by side with this relaxation of the law advanced the growth of the legends concerning him who first preached it. The further they removed from his decease, the higher, as was natural, he rose in their esteem. As one by one the fathers fell asleep, and the early enthusiasm died, and the law was felt to be more and more burdensome, the less he seemed to be a man of like passions with themselves, till eventually they came to regard him as "omniscient and absolutely sinless."[2] He had taken away their gods, and disowned their religious cravings. He professed to find no proper divine being to whom any instinct should attach itself—yea, in his dissection and analysis of human nature he found no religious faculty to be relied upon; but he could not unmake his fellow-men,

[1] The beginning of the dissensions is related in Kullavagga vii. with much legendary adornment. There too, in vii. 5, and in Mahavagga, x. 1. 6, the distinction is drawn between "dissension" and "schism," and the woe predicted for the breaker-up of the Sangha when it was at peace: "He is boiled for a kalpa in Niraya, doomed for so long to a penance of misery." The reconciler of a divided Sangha was made happy for a kalpa in heaven.

[2] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Handbook of Buddhism*, p. 182.

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whose religious instinct education can neither originate nor eradicate; and so, defrauded of its natural gratification, it inevitably turned to illegitimate methods of appeasing itself. In the first instance, it found the objects of its reverence in the relics which survived him, the law which he preached, and the Order which he founded. Originally it could not be called worship; it was more an expression of affectionate homage.[1] But so strong is man's impulse to worship, that very early they expressed it in images of Buddha everywhere, though the images of the Law and of the Order have only been found in the lands where the Northern Buddhism reigns.

This earliest triad of personalities, called "triratna," the three gems or three holies, seems to have been suggested by, and certainly corresponds with, the primitive triad of deities in the old Indian Pantheon.[2] It was the first indication of the bankruptcy of Buddhism, of its failure out of its own resources to meet the religious wants of its disciples, and it marked only the beginning of a revolt, which was to issue in complete disavowal of every doctrine essential to original Buddhism. The religious conscience and common sense which

[1] Beal, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 101: "a worship of association and memory."

[2] Agni. Indra, Sūrya; Kern, *Buddhismus*, vol. ii. p. 156; Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 175.

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rebelled against its unnatural atheism, would not long be satisfied with the worship of the memory of a completely vanished Buddha, or of the idea of an impersonal Law, or of a miscellaneous Order. So pious Buddhists turned readily to a doctrine said to be taught by the Master, and formulated before the settlement of the Southern canon in its present form, according to which Buddha is not a distinctive name of just one person, but a title descriptive of a long series of Enlightened Ones, who, leaving, as he was supposed to have done, the estate of a Bôdhisatva[1] in the Tushita heavens, appeared at distant intervals to proclaim the same truth for the deliverance of men and gods. The names of twenty-four of these Buddhas who preceded Gotama have been handed down, and the name of his successor, to whom, upon the attainment of Buddhahood, he transferred his Bôdhisatvaship, and who is to appear after five thousand years for the rediscovery of the truth, was announced as Mâitrêya. To this coming one, the Buddha of "kindness and mercy"—thought to be a personification by some imaginative poet of the gentle spirit of Buddhism—the thoughts and the hopes of the disciples turned, and out of this hope

[1] "A being whose essence (sattva) has become intelligence (bodhu) derived from *self-enlightening* intellect, and who has only once more to pass through human existence before attaining Buddhahood."—Eitel, *Sanskrit-Chinese Dict.*, p. 26; Sir Monier Williams' *Buddhism*, p. 98.

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arose a doctrinal system, which, expanding and enlarging by manifold additions as the time went on, showed that however atheistic the original creed might be, the religion itself had become polytheistic.[1] To Mâitrêya, in his glorious heavens, the deliverer of distant generations, prayers ascended, and worship was rendered by all Buddhists everywhere alike; and out of this cult by far the largest section of them began to evolve deity after deity, till the heavens, in which Buddha could find no superior to himself, were crowded with objects of idolatrous regard.

In this polytheistic development a very great distinction emerged between the Northern or Mahāyāna and the Southern or Hināyāna system of Buddhism. How the divergence originated has not been clearly ascertained, but about the beginning of the Christian era it seems to have been very manifest, and at that time, when sectarian controversy and philosophical speculation threatened to rend the system into fragments, Nâgârdjuna,[2] a

[1] Wassilief, *Le Bouddhisme, etc.*, pp. 124 *seq.*; Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la bonne Loi*, p. 302.

[2] Nâgârdjuna, the Nagasēna of the Milindipanha, was the chief representative, if not founder, of one of the Mahāyāna Schools. He has been regarded as a mythical personage, and the name has been supposed to be the generic one of various authors and doctors of the system. For an account of Hināyāna and Mahāyāna doctrine, with its subdivisions, see Wassilief, *Le Bouddhisme, etc.*, pp. 9 *seq.*, 118 *seq.*; Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet*, pp. 19-57. Nâlanda must have been a very

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monk of Nâlanda, is said to have done for Northern Buddhism what Gregory and Benedict did for the Western Church. Under him, and certainly after him, Northern Buddhism, both in respect of expansive power and of dogmatic and ritualistic development, left Southern Buddhism far behind it. The Hinâyâna, or the "little way" of deliverance, is believed to have been applied by the Northern, not without contempt for the Southern school's arrestment. They did not profess to contradict the Southern faith: they simply included it, and advanced in their "great way" beyond it. To the Southern the *summum bonum* of life meant Arhatship, for that once attained there would be no more re-birth. They acknowledged and worshipped only one Bôdhisatva, the coming Mâitrêya; but the doctors of the North, properly conceiving the estate of the Bôdhisatva to be nobler than that of Arhat, propounded it as the goal of aspiration. Arhatship would indeed secure one's own deliverance; but Bodhisatvahood would enable them, as possible coming Buddhas, to confer the blessings of deliverance upon countless multitudes. Along with Mâitrêya they discovered many persons who, like Buddha's great disciples and their successors, had through merit, acquired in a long series of lives,

important centre in Buddhist times.—Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 79.

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taken his Tushita heavens by violence; but who, unlike him, were under no obligation to quit their celestial abodes, and proceed through Buddhahood to Nirvana. They might enjoy their blessedness to the full, and sit beside their nectar without concern, for they fulfilled every function expected of them in being objects of worship, to whom mortals could appeal for comfort in sorrow and help in time of need.

In India, as early as Fa-Hian's time, and probably earlier in China,[1] out of these happy gods a new triad was formulated, receiving such worship as Hindus would render to their later triad of deities, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva. The title of one of these, Mandjus-ri, was said to have been the name of the monk who, two hundred and fifty years after Buddha, introduced the religion into Nepaul, and founded the system which Nâgârdjuna consolidated.[2] He in this connection is believed to be the personification of that "wisdom" or "spiritual insight" which the Northern school valued so highly. Another deity, Avalôkitês'vara, "the lord who sees from on high," is supposed to be the mythical term for that "kindly providence" which watched over the whole Buddhist world. And

[1] Dr. Edkins says about 190 A.D.

[2] Burnouf, *Introd. à l'histoire du Bud. Ind.* vol. i. pp. 220, 224 (Paris, 1844); also Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la bonne Loi*, chap. xxiv. pp. 261-268; also Appendix III. pp. 498-511 (Paris, 1852).

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Vajra-dhara, "the thunderer," represented the power which protected the faithful from the malice of demons. How such a worship, so contradictory to the doctrines of primitive Buddhism, came to be introduced and recognised, is a puzzle to all our scholars. Rhys Davids and Sir Monier Williams are inclined to regard it as suggested by the second Hindu triad of deities already referred to. Professor Max Müller[1] considers it to be a graft from the superstitions of some northern Scythian or Turanian race, while Dr. Beal advances the theory that it was in all probability introduced from a western monotheistic religion, either landward through Persia, or by sea from Arabia. However it came, from this date and onwards, all over the wide extent of territory covered by it, Buddhism rapidly deteriorated. While the Southern system was everywhere yielding to the influence of the popular mythology, and that so unmistakably that it became, wherever it reached, "the unconscious propagator of Hindu doctrine," the Northern became a heterogeneous mixture of all the superstitions which it met. From this second triad of deities it went on discovering or inventing its five triads of Dhyâni-Buddhas, among whom Gotama was the emana-

[1] Müller, Gifford Lectures, *Natural Religion*, p. 543; Dr. Beal, *Buddhism in China*, p. 123; Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 195.

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tion of Avalôkitês'vara, who again was the æon of Amitâbha, "immeasurable light." Behind all these again, they professed to find the Adi-Buddha, the primordial Buddha, who, out of himself, by the exercise of five meditations, evolved the Five Dhyâni.[1] Each of these again by "insight" evolved their corresponding æons, who in their turn from out of their immaterial essence produced a material world. It is as if the Gnosticism which had broken out in the West long before this time had also invaded the distant East,[2] and as if its dreams, more restrained by Western sobriety, were in the East free to produce a phantasmagoria more confused still. Certainly it is a convincing proof that, notwithstanding its rich ethical sources, the essential principles of Buddhism had no inherent propagative power. For just as it had to return from its atheism to the deities which it had discarded, so it had to substitute for its Nihilism

[1] Hodgson, *Illustrations of the Literature and Religion of the Buddhists*, p. 30; Burnouf, *Introduction, etc.*, pp. 116-121; also in note at p. 118, quoting Hodgson.

[2] Though strong affinities exist between Gnosticism and Buddhism, which may indicate later connection, in their origin they appear to have been quite distinct. The methods, aims, and terminology of Gnosticism, all betoken derivation from purely Western sources. It is quite possible that Gnosticism may have given Adi-Buddha to the East, but the question of their relations is still undetermined. See Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.* p. 309; Obry's *Nirvana, etc.*, p. 161; Bishop Lightfoot, Essay on the Essenes (*Epistle to Colossians*), p. 157; *Home and Foreign Review*, vol. iii. pp. 143 *seq.* (1863).

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the Western Paradise, where, beyond the confines of the world, the pious Buddhist at last hopes to join the one Supreme Amitâbha, and millions of blessed Buddhas discoursing upon all things good, in a state in which there is no sorrow, and, "strangest to say, no Nirvana." [1]

The more these imaginary deities increased, the more must the earnest moral teachings of Buddha have been obscured. The discovery of the Bôdhisatvas opened the way to a rapid declension from primitive self-culture to a system of "voluntary humility." Discipleship became easier in proportion as the worship of these shadowy creations extended. It is much easier to idolise than obey, to say, "Lord, Lord," than to do the thing which he commands. This falling away from the high Buddhist rule of self-control, proceeding step by step with the growth of the legends, is just an illustration of the tendency in every religion to allow the ethical and metaphysical elements so to drift asunder, that instead of being one in holy wedlock they become thoroughly and irreconcilably opposed.

It was inevitable in Buddhism that morality, considered essential to self-rescue, should be supplanted by that debasing belief in the efficacy of

[1] Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 203; Dr. Beal, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 128; Dr. Eitel, *Lectures*, p. 98.

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rites which the system was launched to destroy. Its founder went to the unnatural extreme of ignoring man's craving for reconciliation. He had no faith in Divine forgiveness, or in the grace of repentance, and he never wearied of pouring contempt upon sacrifice and prayer. No Hebrew prophet could be more severe in his scorn of useless rites; but then the Hebrew believed in the efficacy of one sacrifice, a "heart broken by sorrow," for sin not as a misfortune or a folly, but as an offence to a Holy Being who was ready to forgive, and to be pleased with the worship of a will surrendered in gratitude and in love. Very early in his history man has indicated his sense of alienation from God in his endeavours to discover an atonement. The instinctive sense of wrong relations to the powers that govern life has been liable to fearful perversion, but Buddha, with all his denunciation, could not destroy it, nor reason men out of it. He could induce some to withdraw their imploring cries and glances from the gods, but he could not sweep the heavens clean of them. Belief in the existence[1] of gods, and demons, and fairies, and charms against ill-luck, was strong in his disciples from the first; and when an object of worship was recognised and allowed, an elaborate ritual of worship, and latterly of propitiation, was rapidly developed. In Northern

[1] Kullavagga, v. 21. 4; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx.

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Buddhism this recoil was most extreme, for there, especially in Nepāl and Tibet, belief in the efficacy of rites deteriorated into belief in spells and incantations, till it issued in the Tantra system —a mixture of magic and sorcery whose abominable doctrines, Burnouf, out of very loathing, refused to translate to us.[1] Christianity has had many corrupters, who have never scrupled to propose or to accept any compromise with heathenism at all calculated to strengthen the power of the priesthood, but it never had its Âsanga,[2] who cleverly succeeded in reconciling the demonolatry of the people of Nepāl and Tibet with the acceptance of the Buddhist system. This he did by placing their male and female devils in the inferior heavens as worshippers of Buddha and Avalôkitês'vara, and by thus making it possible for the half-savage tribes to bring their sacrifices, even of blood, to their congenial shrines, and under cover of allegiance to the priests of the new to continue the old hideous idolatry.

This discovery of Âsanga's is said to have secured the rapid extension of the Buddhist hierarchy

[1] *Introd.* § vi. p. 558 : "La plume se refuse à transcrire des doctrines aussi misérables quant à la forme, qu'odieuses et dégradantes pour le fond."

[2] Âryasanga, founder of the Yôgacharya or contemplative system of Mahāyāna (*circa* 400 A.D.). For an account of his doctrine, see Wassilief, *Le Boudd.* pp. 288 *seq.*, and Schlagintweit, *Bud. in Tibet*, pp. 39 *seq.*, 46 *seq.* ; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 207 *seq.*

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in these half-barbarous regions; but the hierarchy itself indicated a complete reversal of the primitive constitution of the Order. Buddha endeavoured to emancipate his fellow-men from faith in the efficacy of a priesthood to mediate between men and Deity, or to secure deliverance. He never dreamed that either temple or priest would arise in his system; but the temple grew naturally out of the dagoba and the relics which it enshrined, and the priesthood as naturally was evolved from the Sthavira or senior Bikkhu. In Southern Buddhism the priest is more like a Protestant minister of religion than like a priest in the Romish sense of the word; but in Northern Buddhism, and especially in that form of it dominant in Tibet, the people from the seventh century have been completely under the power of the Lamas who alone can work out their salvation. With the exception of a short interval of neglect and persecution, a hierarchy marvellously similar to, and no doubt in some respects suggested by, that of Romish Christianity, has completely controlled all the relations of life,[1] with the terrible result that cruelty and immorality most abhorrent to the good and gentle Buddha have been permitted to assert

[1] A writer in the *Nineteenth Century*, October 1889, professes to describe the testimony of the only reporter who has written of Lhása since Huc and Gabet were expelled from it forty-five years ago. According to this witness, the Church is now actually in grip of the State, though nominally dominant. Of five members of the Council of the

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themselves unopposed, though a devotee who slaughters his fellow-men in cold blood will shudder with horror if by accident he should tread upon a worm or crush an over-irritating flea.[1]

Only once in that region has it experienced any attempt at reform. In the fourteenth century, when the policy of the Ming dynasty in reducing the predominance of any one sect had prepared the way for him, Tsong-Kapa, "the Tibetan Luther," endeavoured to effect a revival of the primitive rules of the Order, and succeeded in restoring something of the ancient simplicity in dress, the celibacy of the priests, the fortnightly confession, the season of yearly retreat, and the invitation ceremony at its close. He set his face also against the Shamanism of the Tantra system, adhered to the purer forms of the earlier Mahā-

Grand Lama four are laymen, superior military officers, with the Regent at their head. Till the Grand Lama is eighteen years of age, the Regent is supreme, and for sixty years, not a single Grand Lama, chosen as an infant, has survived his eighteenth birthday!!

[1] Buddhism, however, introduced into Tibet the benefits of the art of writing, the reduction of its language to an alphabet, and grammar; and not only the sacred literature represented by the collection of the Kandjur, but the very miscellaneous literature of the Tandjur. Several of its Buddhist missionaries and the kings who favoured them were really great men. Kublai Khan and the first Lamistic Pope Phags-pa, 1259-94, rendered lasting service to the cause of civilisation. See Köppen's *Die Lamaische Hierarchie und Kirche*, being vol. ii. of his celebrated and most laborious work, *Die Religion des Buddha*; T. W. Rhys Davids, Art. LAMAISM, *Encyc. Brit.* vol. xiv.; Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, pp. 262-302.

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yāna school, and succeeded in creating a new sect, whose leaders in the fifteenth century were by the Chinese Emperor recognised as titular lords over the Church and tributary rulers over the State, under the titles of Dalai Lāma and Pantshen Lāma. The dream of Hildebrand or Leo for the Papacy was for centuries more than realised in the Lāmaism of Tibet, for the Lamas are more than Popes, being re-incarnations of Avalôkitês'vara and of his father Amitabha, who never die, but at the act of dying transfer themselves into another body, born at that very moment, to be found in it in due time through a procedure, according to lot, never yet known to fail. When discovered, he has, however, to be accepted after the Erastian fashion by the Chinese Government or its representative, who, with the Desi or Regent, must also be present when the final lot is drawn.[1]

Never under the Papacy, even in the times when its pretensions were most extravagant, and its power was most unchecked, has Christianity

[1] The most recent and reliable information as to this perverted form of Buddhism—if it is to be called Buddhism, for it seems to be no more Buddhism than Vaudoux worship can be called Christianity—will be found in the works of T. W. Rhys Davids; Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*; Babu Sarat Chunder Das, "Religious Hist. of Thibet," *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng.* 1881; *Life and Works of Alex. Csoma de Koros*, Th. Duka, Lond. 1885; E. Colborne Baber, *Travels and Researches in Western China*; Bushell's "Hist. of Thibet," *Journ. R. A. S.* vol. xii. 1878-79.

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deteriorated so fearfully as Buddhism has done in Nepāl and Tibet. Not even in the Abyssinian—the most degraded of all the Churches that have worn the name of Christ, in respect of its incorporation of old Jewish rites and Egyptian superstitions—can we find the contrivance of the prayer-wheel, or the poles with their silken flags blazoned with the six sacred syllables, "om mani padme hum,"[1] fluttering their supposed incantations to the heavens. Buddhism's ages of worship have been only a long sad history of degradation, of perpetual falling from bad to worse.[2] The higher the worship of Buddhists for the founder of their system has risen, the more have they fallen from his virtue; but in Christianity the ages of strongest devotion to Christ have ever been the periods of progress. The more intense man's reverence for Christ has been, the loftier has been the standard of virtue attained. Worship and pursuit of holiness have gone hand in hand, and we cannot conceive of a life truly offered up in adoration of Christ ever proving immoral or impure.

The story of Buddhism in India, where without much resistance it yielded to the seductions of Vishnaism and Sivaism, the record of its conquests in the surrounding countries, and especially in

[1] An invocation of Avalôkitês'vara, who is believed to have delivered it to the Tibetans.—Klaproth, *Fragments Bouddhiques*, p. 27; Hodgson, *Illustrations*, p. 171; Charles Loring Brace, *Gesta Christi*, p. 455.

[2] Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet*, pp. 227-272.

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those just referred to, present few and slight analogies to the history of Christianity; but the story of Buddhism in China as related by those most competent to testify of the changing forms which it assumed from the fourth century onwards, is significantly akin to that of Christianity after it became the religion of the Empire. China, unlike India, had before the Christian era a very ancient history, marked by distinct epochs. Its annals, even of the eighth century B.C., seem to reflect a civilisation similar to that of Europe in the thirteenth century A.D. Two thousand years B.C. the Chinese are said to have attained to an idea of Deity somewhat equivalent to the El Elion of Melchizedek.[1] Shangti, the highest of all spirits to whom the people sacrificed, was the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the world, unapproachable by the sinner, but merciful to all penitents; and in this idea of God, and in the morality which sprang from it, we have the secret of that social and political progress whose arrestment and decay Confucius lamented. Living in a degenerate age, he laboured earnestly as a reformer of personal morality and social order; but, departing himself from the ancestral faith in a Supreme Ruler of nature and man, "respecting, but keeping aloof, as he said, from all spiritual beings," expressively silent as to the future, and

[1] *Chinese Review*, vol. xi. p. 162; Beal, *Buddhism in China*, p. 233.

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refusing to present motives of conduct drawn from consideration of it, his vigorous ministry, conducted for many years in many of the States, could only have the effect of preparing the way for a real regeneration of society. He had great faith in man, as born good, with an innate moral faculty which only contact with the world and the delusion of the senses prevent from making him virtuous. Man was made for society, and the five relations of which society consists—that of ruler and subject, husband and wife, parent and child, elder brother and younger, and friend and friend—were Divine ordinances. His standard of personal righteousness and social purity, his strong faith in the power of example, his golden rule, "*What you would not like to have done to yourself, do not to any other*,"[1] his demand, as urgent as was that of Isaiah or Socrates,[2] that language should be used ever with scrupulous care to express only the thing that is, have gone far to form, with beneficial ethical results, the ordinary Chinese character. His ignoring of per-

[1] Once when a heathen asked Hillel to show him the whole Jewish religion in a few words, he replied, "*Do not unto others what thou wouldst not should be done unto thee.*" Kuenen's *Religion of Israel*, p. 243 (quotes Talmud, Sabbath, 31 a.)

[2] See Isaiah xxxii. 5, 6. Socrates says in *Phaedo*, "to use words wrongly and indefinitely is not merely an error in itself; it also creates evil in the soul." A vast amount of mischief is done by the misapplication of good adjectives to bad subjects. All true reformers, with Confucius, labour for a rectification of names.

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sonal Deity, only referred to under the vague term Heaven, and of the future of man, could not long arrest the degeneracy of society or purge out the secret vices burrowing beneath its surface. If Buddha is to be regarded in his bold metaphysical speculations as the first of Gnostics, Confucius in his pure secularism may be designated the first Agnostic, and the monotonous and stagnant type of humanity which his teaching has produced may be a warning of the kind of civilisation which the world may expect should ever philanthropic secularism supplant or supersede the religion of Christ.[1]

Contemporary with Confucius, though much older in years, was Lao-tsze the Venerable, the author of the celebrated Tâo-teh-King, in which not only Romish missionaries but scholars like Montucci of Berlin (1808) and Remusat[2] (1823) professed to find the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the name of Jehovah phonetically expressed. Twenty years later Stanislas Julien[3] dispelled these illusions, and showed that the treatise was as agnostic in its essential teachings as were the Analects of Confucius. A poet and a mystic, he gave his whole strength to

[1] Shu King, Shi King, Pref. and Introd. pp. 1-27, by Dr. Legge; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iii.

[2] *Mémoire sur la Vie et les Opinions de Lao-tsze.*

[3] Translation of the Tâo-teh-King, under the title, *Le Livre de la Voie et de la Vertu.*

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enforce the virtue of Tao—the *way*[1] of man's return to that spontaneity of action without motive which prevails in nature, and which will manifest itself in man, in humility, gentleness, refusal to take precedence in the world, in accounting the great as the small, the small as the great, and *in recompensing injury with kindness.*[2] He does not affirm the existence of God, but he does not deny it, and his language seems to imply it. Certainly there is not a word which savours of superstition, and yet he is the reputed founder of a most idolatrous religion, which is found in shape five centuries after his death. The works of his earliest followers are said to be full of the most grotesque and absurd beliefs. As early as 221 B.C. some of them were in search of the Eastern Hesperides, where grew the herb of immortality. In the first century A.D. another professor of Taoism invented a pill containing the elixir of life, and spells which could tame and destroy by the touch of a pencil millions of demons. All through its history it has been a conglomerate of superstitions so base, and so contrasted with the teaching of the Tâo-teh-King,

[1] μέθοδος, Prof. Douglas, *Confucianism and Taoism*, p. 189.

[2] It is very interesting to find, so long before Christianity, and so far from its cradle, this fundamental rule in Christian morals. In the Book of Proverbs its enunciation may have preceded that in the Tao-teh-King in point of time; but its being uttered at the end of the world, along with the "golden rule" of Confucius, prove how essentially one are the moral instincts of humanity.

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that to make the author of that literary relic bear the obloquy of even the slightest connection with Taoism, appears to be one of the grossest wrongs of history.[1]

These sages preceded Buddha by a century, whose religion, though it came into contact with China shortly after the reign of Asoka, did not seriously begin to influence it till about the fourth century A.D. The Buddhism of that period was the religion of the Northern school, well advanced in its second stage of degeneracy. Wherever it was encouraged, or allowed to maintain itself, it reared monasteries and nunneries, temples and shrines of idols and relics, and established the worship of saints and images, which sometimes, like winking Madonnas, opened their eyes and otherwise worked miracles. Its effect upon Taoism was simply to absorb it; for before then that religion had neither monasteries nor temples, nor any system of worship. All these it borrowed from Buddhism, whose Tri-ratna and endless pantheon of deities it greedily accepted, with the effect that though Taoism has existed nominally distinct from Buddhism in China, it has simply been as Buddhism in a native dress, and thus far the Hindu mind can be truly said to have powerfully influenced Chinese thought.

[1] Dr. Legge's Preface to vol. iii. of *Sacred Books of the East*, p. xxi; also Art. LAO-TSZE, *Encyc. Brit.* vol. xiv.

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By the Confucians the reception of Buddhism was very different. They might have laughed at its idolatrous system budding vigorously into life, but they could not endure its full-blown anti-social Monasticism. Its morality they could appreciate, though it seemed inferior to their own; for though its teaching as to future rewards commended itself to the moral instincts of the masses, the Confucians, more logical than Buddhists, averred that to avoid wrong-doing for fear of future punishment was not doing right for its own sake; while to labour for happiness hereafter led to neglect of the present, and promoted lazy inactivity. Such a scheme of religion was by them judged inimical to virtue, which was its own reward, and the manner of life by which it was illustrated was condemned as particularly immoral. The State, the Family, Society, were Divine institutions which ought to be maintained and perfected. Industry, public and private, was essential to their ideal of propriety; and Buddhism, with its religion of inaction, its celibate rule, and abandonment of all secular business, was simply odious to the instincts of a practical and kindly people. There could only be war between two such contradictory systems—a war not of words, but, on the Chinese side at least, of very hard blows. Their hostility manifested itself in repeated and prolonged persecutions. In one of these 250,000

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monks and nuns were forced to return to social life, while their property was confiscated, and the copper of their images and bells was minted into coin. The Confucians have long ceased to persecute, but they have never withdrawn their first indictment against the Buddhists for teaching what to them is criminal because disloyal, and immoral[1] because anti-social.

To the ethical system of China, as represented by Confucians, Mahāyāna Buddhism could not add much, if indeed anything, of value; but its speculative philosophy seems peculiarly to have fascinated them, and it produced remarkable and permanent changes in their thinking. The literature and the art of China reflect not Chinese but Indian scenes and manners. Its grammatical and arithmetical sciences owe much to Indian tutelage. An educated Chinaman, while avowing himself Confucian in respect of ethics, will in all metaphysical problems reason according to Buddhist methods and enunciate Buddhist ideas. To this extent, therefore, it affected the Confucians, but not with beneficial results. It aided Confucius in his evil work of shaking the faith of "the classes" in the personal Ruler of the Universe, while its effect upon "the masses" was even more injurious, for it dragged

[1] Dr. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 128, 202; Beal, *Introduction to Fa-Hian*, p. 27.

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them down to a polytheism from which for centuries they had been free, and put in place of the impersonal principle with which Confucius had supplanted their ancestral faith, those shadowy crowds of Buddhas and Bôdhisatvas, to lead them still further away from the purer works and ways of more reverential ages.[1]

The episodes in the history of Chinese Buddhism from the fourth century onward were marvellously similar to the scenes and incidents witnessed in Europe during the same period in connection with the Christian Church. Cardinal Newman has somewhere said that in "professing to write the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Gibbon has reluctantly, but actually, written the Rise and Progress of Christianity." The most zealous defender of the faith, however, must admit that the Christianity which maintained in Europe from the fourth century onward had grievously declined from that of the primitive ages. It is the fashion in some quarters to attribute this degradation to the alliance of the Church with the State, and to aver that had it kept apart from the embraces of the Emperors it would have preserved itself from corruption. Unquestionably Constantine was a "sair sanct" to the Church; a convert more from expedience than

[1] Douglas, *Confucianism*, p. 84; Beal, *Buddhism in China*, p. 235; Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 333.

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conviction, he and his successors endeavoured to utilise the Christian hierarchy to buttress their own throne. Unquestionably, too, the Church suffered more indignity and harm from the Christian Emperors who patronised it, than ever it did from the heathen Emperors who persecuted it. Candid inquiries will, however, convince most people that the alliance with the Empire was more an incident in than the cause of the Church's degradation. The transfer of the seat of rule to the Bosporus left the Western Church free from the Imperial influence to regulate its own affairs, and yet it became not less but even more corrupt than its Oriental neighbour. The truth seems to be that the corruption of the Church was due more to its external or material prosperity than to anything else. To churches and to nations that is the real ordeal by fire. In the poverty and struggles they have higher hopes, but when difficulties are surmounted, and they dwell at ease, they mistake or forget their vocation. The adversity and terrible persecution of the Church, coincident with its primitive enthusiasm, did a very great deal to preserve its health and purity; and it was simply natural, and to be expected, that when it emerged into prosperity and popular favour, like Jeshurun in his fatness, it should have rebelled, and instead of serving as it was ordained to do, should have usurped the power to rule.

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The iconography of early Christianity reflects even more clearly than its literature the various stages of its deterioration. As long as the world was against it, and it was compelled to use such places as the Catacombs for its shelter and worship, its faith was pure, and its life was full of exhilaration and brightness. Its symbolism was thoroughly ideal and spiritual, in sharp and instructive contrast with every Pagan specimen that has been discovered, and with its own subsequently paganised art. It was a symbolism, moreover, only of its hopes, and not of its one object of faith or of worship. It tolerated no symbol in worship save the water of Baptism and the bread and the wine of the Eucharist. It needed, as yet, no crucifix, not even a cross,[1] and it would not allow any image to reveal to the imagination the present but invisible Christ, or to suggest the profound meaning of His atonement. But when it went forth, the admired of the world, into the sunshine, and began to rear the grand basilicas, and people them with the tombs of the martyrs and the enshrined

[1] In the whole range of the Catacombs no crucifix, and only very few crosses have been found, and these generally in a disguised form. The communion of the early Church was with Christ risen and triumphant; it was only when the spirit and fervour of worship declined that it made so much of the crucifixion.—Northcote and Brownlow's Abridgment of De Rossi's *Roma Sotterranea*; Smith and Cheetham, *Dict. of Christian Antiq.*, Art. CATACOMBS, pp. 294 *seq.*; Witherow, *Catacombs*, pp. 260, 281.

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relics of the saints, the very desire to rise led it to fight heathenism with its own weapons, and to copy its splendours.[1] Even before this it was falling back from the simple service of the synagogue to that of the destroyed temple, but now it was found adopting the heathen festivals, or accommodating its own to their dates, and incorporating with its own the more imposing rites of still popular heathen fanes. To "offer the new law's new oblation" it invented a new ritual and priesthood; and seeing a priesthood must have somewhat to offer, it discovered a new sacrifice in the very sacrament which was the Divine pledge and human thanksgiving for the abrogation of all external sacrifice.[2] Then the government of the Empire became the model of its

[1] The efficiency of *relic-worship* may be said to have been established as early as the fourth century. Julian compares the churches to whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones. Development of *image-worship* proceeded *pari passu* with the erection of fine churches and their adornment with painting and sculpture. There were all along strong protests from individual bishops, and even prohibitions by Councils, but the fashion was too strong for their fulminations. Even in the eighth century the iconoclastic reformation of Leo the Isaurian was too late. His zeal, moreover, was wrongly directed. He assailed high art, and condemned only the truly fine paintings, sparing the ruder and more ancient productions, and leaving untouched the worship of and disgraceful traffic in relics, real and spurious. It is not to be wondered at that in opposition to all this Gregory in the West became the champion of art as an aid to devotion.—Milman, *Lat. Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 152.

[2] In protesting against the Mass, the Reformed Churches maintain the universal priesthood, and therefore perpetual sacrifice, of the visible Church. As Christ's witness on earth, the Church must be always offering itself, in thanksgiving for its own redemption, for the salvation of the world.

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organisation, and soon it was crowned in a Papacy professing to dominate, as vicegerent for Christ, a world which confessedly it has not yet been able to convert.

It is not necessary to trace the sickening degradation of Christianity through all its encounters and compromises with heathenism, till in the gathering gloom its degenerate art reached a point where it dared to portray to the eye of sense the death-pangs of the Son of God, and its worship touched a depth of idolatry in which it symbolised the mystery of the Holy Trinity by a three-headed figure quite after the model of the Hindu Trimurti. It is sufficient to say that it appears to have proceeded on parallel lines, and at as rapid a pace as the degeneracy of Buddhism in the East. It too has its iconography as well as its literature, and it is interesting to trace its passage from its earliest graffiti—the stone edicts of Asoka, where we have the religion without even the name of the founder—through the carvings of the Sanchi gateway, where there is alteration, though to no considerable extent, on to those at Amravati, where we have the full-blown Buddhism to which China to a considerable extent succumbed.[1] Through all this period everywhere in Chinese Buddhist temples were seen

[1] Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 67 ; Cunningham, *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 130.

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the idols of the saints, everywhere were found their worshipped relics. A bone, a tooth, a single hair, would be purchased by the revenue of a State and welcomed with imperial honours. The rationalists of the West might protest as loudly and as scoffingly as they pleased that there was as much wood of the true cross and as many veritable nails of it in Europe as would suffice to build a navy. The Confucian mandarins at the court of a relic-worshipping Emperor might indignantly denounce the desecration and pollution of the royal palace by the introduction of part of the carrion of a monk who had died long ago.[1] With the father of Gideon, deriding the wonder-working powers of these relics, they might insist that they, and even Buddha himself, should plead, Baal-like, for themselves against their iconoclastic ire; but at that time neither law, nor persecution, nor common sense could prevail to cure this perverted disposition. Belief in the virtue of a fetich marks both the infancy and decay of most religions. In Chinese Buddhism to-day this belief is as vigorous as ever, and notwithstanding the influence of the Reformation, and the spread of scientific discovery, this belief marks an extreme of thought from which neither Romanism nor Protestantism as yet can be said to be free.

[1] Dr. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 126; Judges vi. 31.

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The Buddhism of the earliest traditions was concerned chiefly with morality as essential to deliverance, and the Christianity of the New Testament is a faith and hope and love, dominating and fusing and moulding life after a nobler type. In China, as elsewhere, the Buddhism of morality gave way to the Buddhism of mystic contemplation. Yielding to the same tendency which afterwards made so many Christians abandon the paths of obedience and practice of righteousness for the cultivation of the inner life, Buddhism as early as 520 A.D. was prepared to follow eagerly Bôdiharma,[1] who came from Southern India to sweep away the alien growth of all book-instruction, and to establish the truth that "out of mind there is no Buddha, out of Buddha there is no mind; that virtue is not to be sought, and vice is not to be shunned; that nothing is to be looked upon as pure or polluted, for all that is needed is to avoid both good and evil, and he that can do this is a truly religious man."[2]

[1] Originally called Bódhitara, but renamed by his teacher Payantara, in token of his religious "insight." He is said to have brought to China the famous alms-bowl, which all the Buddhas of the Kalpa have used, and will use, and whose final disappearance will indicate that the religion is about to perish. Thus Buddhism has also its San Greal. Bôdiharma is called the "wall-gazing Brahman," though a Kshatrya, because on his arrival in China he spent nine years in silent meditation.—Eitel, *Sanskrit Chinese Dict.* p. 24.

[2] Dr. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 130.

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In proclaiming that ethical distinctions mark an inferior stage of discipleship, for a "good man, though never against, is always above them," Bôdiharma, the nominal founder of Esoteric Buddhism, simply formulated more clearly the teaching of Nâgârdjuna, the reputed founder of the Mahāyāna system. It was only another expression of that indefinable phase of thought, found in all religions as mysticism, and which, though commonly identified only with its extravagant outbursts, is really of the very essence of religion. The dominating thought in a religious man is that of a Supreme One in whom we live and move and have our being, and there are times in his worship when the balance of consciousness is disturbed, and self is lost in consciousness of the Divine. Man without the aid of prayer or sacramental grace finds in himself the revelation, and alas! as his consciousness is always imperfect, and very often confused, the revelation is too often distorted and the reverse of Divine.[1]

Mysticism, as was natural in a religion quicken-

[1] Men who have in vain sought God without have happily found Him in the witness of their own conscience and affection, but generally they who conceitedly reject the revelation without them only obscure the seeing faculty within. "When mysticism threw off external authority it went mad, as in the revolutionary pantheism of the Middle Ages. When it incorporated itself more and more in revealed truth, it became a benign power—as on the eve of the Reformation."—Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, vol. ii. p. 356.

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ing both thought and emotion, appeared early in Christianity, and from the days of St. John it has never lacked a representative. In its manifold varieties and aberrations it presents many similarities to the mysticism of the East, but in reality it is as different from it in its nature as it is distant from it in its source. Eastern mysticism has always been more speculative than practical in character. Pantheistic in its origin, it assumes that all things are as divine as it is their nature to be, and aspires to get at the unity of being. Western mysticism, on the other hand, starts always from a sense of the disorder and alienation of things, and endeavours to get at man's true life. The Eastern finds its object within, the Western generally without; the Eastern considers identity with Deity a natural state, the Western regards perfect fellowship with Deity as a goal of spiritual attainment. In Christianity mysticism has been occasional in its manifestations, and has always been regarded as an innovation; but in the East it is the normal deduction from Hindu Pantheism and Buddhist Nihilism.[1] Nâgârdjuna and Bôdiharma were the natural outcome of Gotama's teaching. In Christianity it has often shown itself to be marvellously practical, and generally in revolt from some stereotyped system of dogma or form of worship. Though

[1] "Mysticism," A. Seth, *Encyc. Brit.* vol. xvii. pp. 129-136.

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associated in our thoughts more with the sentimental than the intellectual aspects of religion,[1] it has manifested frequently a decidedly rationalistic tendency. Refusing to be dominated by authority or to be bound by antiquity, it has questioned fearlessly the dicta of Scripture, avowing that reason is not superseded, but divinely inspired and controlled as the organ of revelation. In Christianity its extravagances may be forgiven in consideration of the benefits which have flowed from it. It powerfully helped to bring about the Reformation, and since then, in the Churches, whether reformed or unreformed, it has tended to sweeten and intensify devotion. It has kept them mindful of their common lineage by insisting upon those essential and universal truths which are confessed to be vital in all religions, and especially by proclaiming the supremacy of the Holy Spirit as the fountain of all enlightenment and activity.

As manifested in St. Paul and St. John, mysticism

[1] Correctly so, if we are to judge of Mysticism even from its purest phases and its best representatives, *e.g.* the Quietism of Madame Guyon, the Spiritualism of Swedenborg, the Romanticism of F. von Hardenberg, better known as Novalis. Even on its speculative or philosophical side, it would not be difficult to cull from the writings of the Cambridge Platonists, and the Idealists of Europe and America, extracts equivalent to the aphorisms of Novalis, that "action is morbid," "to dream is to overcome," that "the soul must abandon the actual world if it would discover in the recesses of the mystic night the Queen of Heaven, Eternal Beauty."—*Hymns to Night*, Schriften, vol. ii. p. 158.

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is the recognition of the Holy Spirit as the Witness of Christ, and therefore the supreme lord over all man's emotions and reasonings and purposes. Consequently the asceticism with which mysticism has always been associated has been in Christianity more kept under control. Occasionally it has lapsed into frightful excesses; indeed, the extravagances practised in the East to attain to insight have been equalled by the devices resorted to by many in the West to gain the vision of the Divine. In ingenious methods of self-torture the West certainly vied with the East, but at self-torture perverted Christianity stopped, while degenerate Buddhism went on to invent and put in practice most revolting methods of self-destruction as well. The law of Buddha prohibited this, and forbade even the mention of the advantages of death. It was an offence of the gravest kind, punished by the severest penalty which the Order could inflict,[1] for a monk to procure a weapon for the purpose of taking away his life, or to teach how death may be procured. Still, in India before Fa-Hian's time, self-murder was practised, and in China Imperial edicts against self-mutilation and self-immolation were required to prevent fanatics evading the primitive law by the quibble, that while prohibiting suicide, Buddha enjoined the

[1] Pâtimokkha; Pârâgikâ Dhammâ, 3; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii.

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destruction of anger and lust, and that it was against these alone that they raised their hand, in order to complete their deliverance.[1]

Christianity demands that an ἄσκησις shall be practised by all who desire the illumination of the Spirit, for all that is vile must be purged out of life, and all that is animal in it must be subdued. The discipline, however, is always moral as well as religious, and it aims only at controlling, never, like Stoicism or Cynicism, at stifling or violating natural affection. Unlike Plato, who regarded matter as evil, Christ and His apostles recognised it as the creature of God, and taught us to seek the seat of evil, not in the body, but in the perverted will. In the spirit is the true *fons et origo mali*; but as the occasion of sin directly or indirectly often originates in some desire for bodily indulgence or some dread of bodily pain, temperance and fortitude demand that the body, if not inured to hardness, should be at least kept under control. So bodily exercise,[2] though in itself profiting little, profiteth much as moral discipline, a means to a spiritual end. Consequently the fast in its literal

[1] Beal, Introduction to *Fa-Hian*, p. 42. In an important aspect the perversion of Christianity was worse than that of Buddhism. The Buddhist ascetics, though merciless to themselves, never tortured their vanquished opponents. There is no parallel to the Romish Inquisition and some Protestant atrocities in any of the annals of Buddhism.

[2] ἡ σωματικὴ γυμνασία, 1 Tim. iv. 8.

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sense has its place in the Christian system as an expedient generally most required in the times when we are inclined to despise it. The fanaticism which would destroy or injure what is natural is condemned by Christianity as severely as is the sensuality which would unduly strengthen it. What it demands is that the whole nature be educated and ennobled by loving surrender to the control of an infinitely holy Will. Enjoyment of the vision beatific, communion with the Divine Being, is the *summum bonum* of Christianity, and that is the portion only of the sanctified. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Bôdiharma's mystic or esoteric Buddhism had no such influences to steady and sober it, and its aberrations were wilder than the fancies of our delirium. The supernatural pretensions of mysticism have always been disallowed or condemned in Christianity by overwhelming healthy-minded majorities, but the consequence of the practice of Esoteric Buddhism was believed by all to be supernatural power. An adept in it professed to see through all ages and worlds, and move through space by a sheer exercise of will. All the phenomena of modern spiritualism may have been witnessed in India and China two thousand years ago—yea, centuries perhaps before Buddha appeared. The first pretenders to these mysteries were the Indian Yogis

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and the medicine-men of savage and barbarous races.[1] The "Neo-Buddhism" and "Theosophy" of to-day simply confront us in the cast-off yellow rags of these pitiful superstitions. Their disciples attempt to warm themselves and to walk in the light of the unhallowed flames which the deluded followers of Bôdiharma believed they could kindle. In whatever way the phenomena of spiritualism are to be explained—and one cannot say what phenomena may emerge when the human mind is abandoned to vacuity, and the human will to an ungoverned fancy—we may be certain that investigation of them will never disclose the reality of benign supernatural power. What capabilities may be dormant in humanity no one can tell. Christ who redeemed us is the prophecy of what He can make us. He had supernatural power because His being accorded perfectly with the Heavenly Father's will; but supernatural power as manifested by Christ is very different indeed from the ludicrous exhibitions of the "spiritualists." Christ's supernatural power was not manifested just in their ways, and certainly not by their methods; will it ever be acquired?[2]

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i. p. 440.

[2] "Vient enfin le mysticisme de la dernière époque, qui, de même que tous les mysticismes, finit de la manière la plus misérable, et enfante une idolâtrie grossière, ainsi que les stupides pratiques de la sorcellerie" (Laboulaye, Introd. to La Comme's transl. of Wassilief's *Buddhism*,

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It is not compatible with our space to trace the parallels between Esoteric Buddhism and some nineteenth-century forms of speculation in which the finite is again seen to be going back to the absolute, and the reality of everything but the self is denied. On the religious side, however, it is interesting to notice a later stage of it in a system which, originating not long after Bôdiharma, took some four centuries to establish itself. The T'ien-t'ai or Chi-Che school differed from Bôdiharma's theory of pure mental abstraction to be gained through complete withdrawal from all sensible surroundings, in that it sought to aid contemplation by sensuous exercises. Worship of gay idols, music of many persons chanting in unison, postures of kneeling and standing, exercises of continued and loud recitation, with intervals of profound silence and intense meditation, were supposed to produce the desired illumination. It seemed to be the first recognition of feeling in the Buddhist religion, and the first attempt to employ it to produce ecstasy. The same attempt has often been repeated in the history of Christianity, sometimes in very grotesque

p. xlv). This has often been verified in the religious history of the West, and the fate of many former "spiritual" aspirants to enter or to peer into the Invisible and Unutterable should be a powerful warning to all who are now aiming at surpassing the natural conditions of existence. In endeavouring to transcend humanity, we are likely to fall miserably below it.

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and extravagant forms. In every outburst of religious enthusiasm we may see rude examples of it, but it is also the principle on which æsthetic worship is generally defended. It is a reminder, therefore, to some very superior people, of our common human nature, and a warning that when left to itself, or indulged, even the æsthetic, like all other instincts, will just run the same round of extravagance in manifold and ever-recurring variety.

The tendency in human nature to pervert a religion is as strongly manifested in Christianity as in Buddhism; but there is this outstanding distinction between them, that while a survey of Buddhism shows that everywhere it has run its course, and has exhausted its intellectual and moral and spiritual resources, Christianity upon examination appears to be only in an early stage of development. In spite of the perversions of the Church, and its repeated resistance to Christian movements, Christianity has always produced what has condemned and corrected and vanquished them. It is the recuperative power of Christianity which most distinguishes it. There is nothing in the history of Buddhism which at all corresponds with the Reformation. To-day all over the world it is stereotyped and unprogressive, whereas everywhere in Christendom there is ferment of thought and stirring of life, plainly indicating that whatever

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power may claim the past, Christianity has the sure promise of the future.

In China, two hundred and seventy years ago, originated a sect whose adherents, scattered through the villages of the Eastern Provinces, and belonging principally to the lower classes of society, may be called Protestant or Reformed Buddhists. They are described by Dr. Edkins[1] as opposed to idolatry in all its forms, as having no temple, but only plain meeting-houses, signalised with only the common tablet to heaven, earth, king, parents, and teachers, as their symbol of reverence. Their worship consists not in ceremonies, but in quiet meditation, and inner adoration of the all-pervading Buddha. They are called the "Do-Nothing Sect," not because they are idle, like the ignorant inmates of the monasteries—for they are really industrious and virtuous,—but because they hold that the highest virtue is never intentional, but wholly unconscious of self. Like M. Aurelius,[2] they consider that to ask to be "paid for virtue is as if the eye demanded a recompence for seeing." In thinking of them, the words of the Lord Jesus recur to us: "Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again."

[1] *Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 370-379.

[2] Also Seneca: "We do not love virtue because it gives us pleasure, but it gives us pleasure because we love it."—*De Vit. Beat.* c. ix. "In doing good man should be like the vine, producing grapes, and asking for nothing in having done so."—M. Aurel. v. 6 and ix. 42.

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George Fox, and the quiet and charitable Society which he founded, and which still continues in formal garb his protest against all formalism in worshipping God, not by clamouring to Him, but in silently waiting till He speaks, seems to be the realisation of what these good Wu-wei-Kiau aspire to in their religion. They have not been able to free themselves from Buddhism or Taoism. Buddha, though not worshipped, is believed in by them, and they have found an object of adoration in Kîn-mu, the Golden Mother of the soul, who can protect and deliver from calamity, and even save those that have died from misery. They have four principal festivals, two of which celebrate the birth and death of Lo-tsu, their founder. On these occasions three small cups of tea and nine tiny loaves of bread are placed on the tables, according to the appointment of Lo-tsu himself. On this account they are nicknamed "the Tea and Bread Sect." They are strict vegetarians, but in no other sense ascetics, honouring marriage and family life, and having no monastic institute among them. They aver that one of their leaders during a persecution was crucified, and their great hope is that the world will soon come to an end, and that the Golden Mother will appear, to take all her children—all who believe in her as they do—home to her beautiful heaven.

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This can hardly be called a reformation of Buddhism according either to its original form or its fundamental principles. It is a departure from, and an immense improvement upon it, which is manifestly due to foreign and probably Christian influence. The Nestorians entered China in the seventh, and the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, while Reformed Christianity only came in contact with China in the present generation. If it be denied that Christianity helped to produce the Do-Nothing Sect, it will be difficult to disprove the claim that, directly or indirectly, it has done much to produce the latest forms in which, in China and Japan, Buddhism is now presented to the world. In both countries Reformed Buddhists are found differing in much from one another, but generally agreeing in rejecting polytheism for the worship of one divinity: in China, Kwan-yin, who for long has changed sexes, and is now the goddess of mercy; in Japan, Buddha, whose attribute is Amita, the infinite. One sect, called the "Salvation without Works Sect," has progressed greatly in Japan, under the title of Shin-Shin, "the true religion." The worshipper renounces all merit, and trusts for salvation in nothing but the mercy of Amita.[1] The soul is brought into a state of salvation by an act of faith, and though sure of salvation, the faithful

[1] Herzog, *Encyclop.* (Schaff), vol. i. p. 334.

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must not abandon the struggle with evil, for holiness is not the beginning, but the result of salvation. In Kioti, a Buddhist sect has a college quite Western in its curriculum and arrangements. There too the Japanese newspapers not only record the successes of able Buddhist preachers in spreading their doctrine, and in founding schools, they advertise a Buddhist propaganda for the conversion of Europe and America. Its only organ as yet is a little magazine called the *Bijou of Asia*, but it is printed in English for the enlightenment of all who believe in the moribund creeds of the West, and for the rescue especially of souls from the snare of that Christian superstition which "happily all over the world is rapidly declining in power"!

If this be not impure Christianity, no one will dare to call it pure Buddhism. Surely it is a hopeful indication for the future of Japan, as being evidently a movement somewhat similar to that inaugurated in India by Rammohun Roy, and greatly furthered in our days by Chunder Sen. The first professed to trace his reform to the Upanishads rediscovered, and expounded, and applied; and the second to the Vedas as the primitive fountains of the faith. Both reformers and their work would have been impossible two thousand years ago; yea, they would have been equally impossible to-day, had not the West given of its thoughts to the East,

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and Christendom communicated to it something of its better life. It is one thing to read the Vedas and Upanishads, as the Rishis recited or the Brahmans expounded them long ago, and quite another to have them interpreted by natives of India, around whose forefathers for several generations all the influences of Christian civilisation have been playing. So is it with the reforming Buddhists of China and Japan, who have enterprise to send their sons to study at our British Universities. They are reading their old literature—even when rejecting our systems of belief—with minds unconsciously saturated with Christian intelligence, and no doubt they often find there what the Gospel has put in themselves.

We may rest assured that the reform of the Oriental religions will only be effected by the infusion into them of the spirit of Christianity. A higher religion meeting them as Christianity does, may not supplant or destroy them, but it will revive and transform them. It will destroy much that is false, correct much that is wrong, supply all they lack, and so in the end annul them. The product will not likely be a facsimile of any of the Churches of Christendom. It may be a religion in which Buddha and the great teachers of his system will be lifted to their places among the prophets who, "since the world began," un-

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consciously testified, by their errors as well as by their truths, by their failures as well as by their successes, to the Mystery to be revealed. The fact that in Buddhism the object of worship is not the Buddha that was, but Mâitrêya who is to be, is a pathetic confession that its Messiah has yet to come. Though Buddha did not proclaim His coming, the result of his mission bears witness to the need of Him. So he was a lawgiver preparing the way for Moses, even as Moses prepared the way for the Baptist, and as the Baptist heralded the Christ of God. Could his voice reach down to-day from "the quiet shore" to the millions who have taken hold of him in hope of finding deliverance from the miseries and perplexities of this sinful world, it would be to repeat a testimony once heard on Jordan's banks from him than whom no one born of woman was greater: "There standeth One among you whom ye know not, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose."

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POSTSCRIPT.

In endeavouring to perform the very honourable task assigned to me, I have had to contend all along with the difficulty of comprising in six what would require many more lectures properly to relate. Much which was actually prepared I have been forced to omit, consoling myself with the thought that, after all, I had simply to lecture and not to write a compendious treatise, and that it was my business to sketch as truthfully as I could what it was simply impossible, within the limits prescribed, adequately to depict. It was originally my intention to give in parallel quotations the alleged similarities between the contents of the Pitakas and the New Testament, but the conditions of time and space compelled me to be content with references to specimens of them in the *Sacred Books of the East*, from which any ordinary English reader may be able to form a judgment concerning them. Moreover, when well on with the work, I discovered that a much more thorough examination of Professor Seydel's *Buddhist-Christian Harmony*

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than I could profess to make had already been published by Professor Kellogg of Allegheny, U.S., in his book on the *Light of Asia and the Light of the World.* An Indian missionary of eleven years' experience, and the author of an excellent Grammar of the Hindi language, can write upon this subject, not only with greater authority, but to much better purpose, than one who only knows Indian books through the medium of European translations, and who has not seldom been compelled to take on trust what he felt strongly inclined to question. If Dr. Kellogg's book is not extensively read in this country, it certainly deserves to be.

Our sketch has been confined to Buddhism as a religion and as an ethical system. The philosophy which has grown out of it, and especially the psychology which lies at the base of its original dogmas, would require a large volume to expound. A great field is open here for those who have the ability and the leisure to cultivate it; and though good work has already been done in it, we may be convinced that, until this psychology has been more thoroughly investigated, we must continue in uncertainty as to what original Buddhism was. Though much has been written upon the origin and growth of Buddhism, the first authoritative words are only now beginning to be spoken by the learned translators of the Pali texts; and though

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they have dispelled illusions and corrected false impressions not a few, we cannot affirm that there is a strong consensus of opinion among them as to the life and teaching of the founder of Buddhism. One is greatly impressed by the modest hesitation with which they have presented their views, but this very diffidence makes one fear that we may be attributing to Buddha sayings which he never uttered, or that we have drawn from them inferences which he would have disowned.

In working out a sketch like this, the temptation constantly besetting one is to compare or contrast actual Buddhism with ideal Christianity.

I have endeavoured to bear in mind that our modern religion may in many features grossly misrepresent that of its Divine Author, and, indeed, that "Christianity has all along been much embarrassed in being obliged to apologise for Christendom."[1] In like manner I have tried to make plain the great distinction between the original system of Buddha and that which very soon came to be known by his name. An Oriental will certainly misjudge Christianity if he derives his knowledge of it from mediæval theology or from some nineteenth-century sermons; and we may unconsciously commit the same mistake in ascribing to the primitive dogmas the interpretation put upon them by its later

[1] *Eternal Atonement*, by Dr. R. D. Hitchcock, p. 157.

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schools.[1] I have read several books in which this mistake was flagrant, and I should be extremely sorry to follow their bad example. In the present state of our knowledge, however, and until the earliest texts have been accurately ascertained, and sifted, and classified, this, to a certain extent, is inevitable, and therefore excusable. If I have failed in my attempt to portray accurately even the salient features of this great religion, it has been from no desire to caricature it. The days have surely passed when it could be said that we were "too infatuated by a sense of the superiority of our own to make a fair survey of other religions."[2] It is our duty, and it will be for our interest, to do justice to them, and, instead of being content with the schoolboy's endeavour to prove them false, we should seek carefully among the ruins of the most degraded of them for all the elements of truth we can discover. It is in this direction that we must proceed if we would find solid foundations for a true Christian theology, and the more we address ourselves to the work the more likely shall we be to convince the Church of the proper value of the Faith deposited in its keeping, and to rouse it to realise its destiny and fulfil its glorious mission to the world.

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, Hibbert Lectures, p. 196.

[2] Quinet, *Le Génie des Religions*, p. 13.

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In correcting these sheets for the press, I have often been sensible of my great obligations to a very highly valued personal friend, whose goodness was as remarkable as his learning. May I be forgiven if, in gratitude for his kind and generous help in these very studies, given now long ago, I desire to keep alive the memory of this justly esteemed Sanskrit scholar, by adding this little stone to his cairn, and adorning my book with the name of Dr. John Muir.

Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to Her Majesty,
at the Edinburgh University Press.

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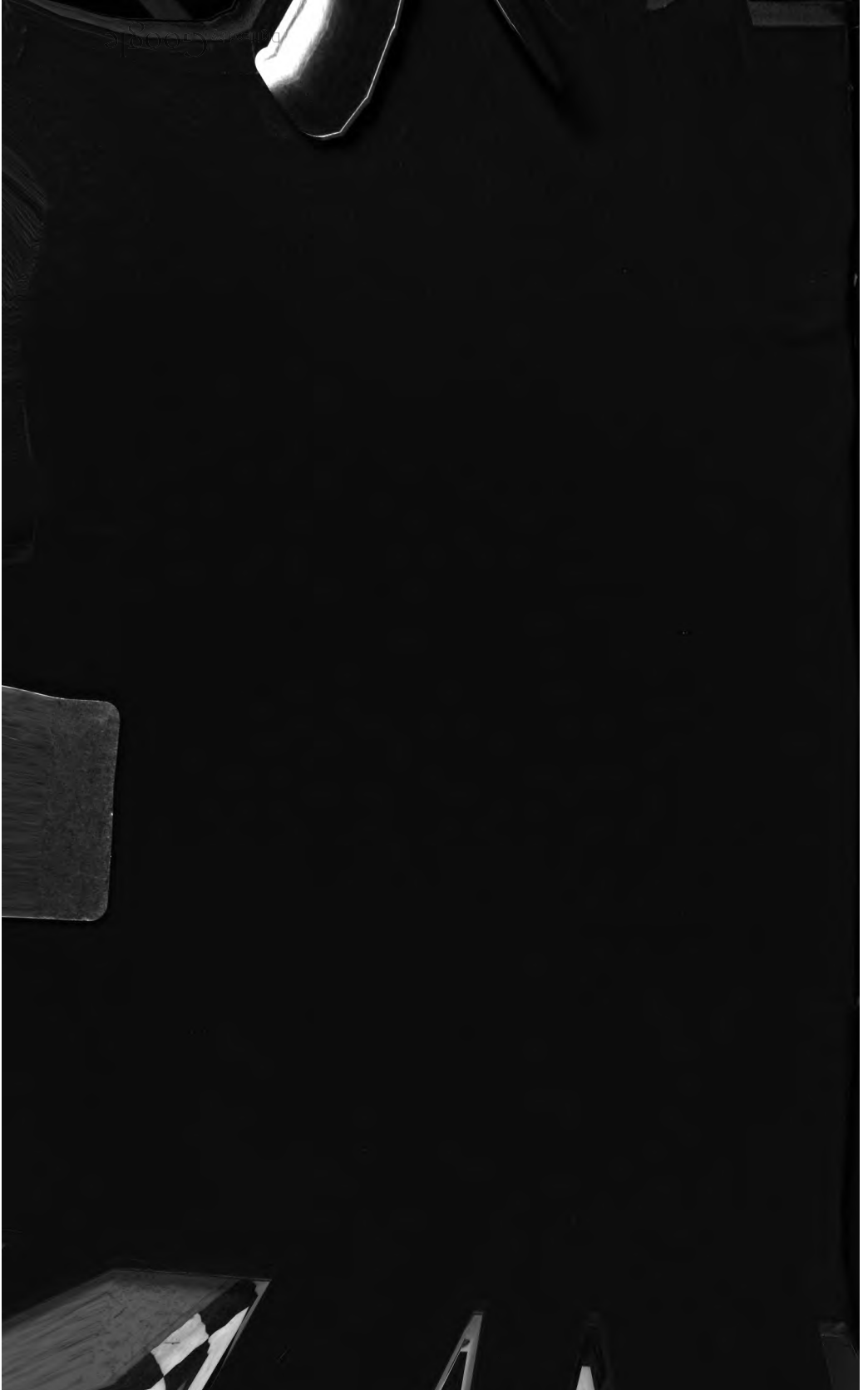

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